

Cypriot leader wants U.S. guarantee

WASHINGTON (R) — President Glafos Clerides of Cyprus said Friday he would urge the United States to become a guarantor of a possible future agreement reuniting his divided island. Mr. Clerides said even a territorial integrity would reassure the rival Greek and Turkish communities and boost chances for settlement of the 18-year-old conflict. "I think the two sides will meet at the White House," he said in a meeting with reporters at the Cypriot embassy. Talks on reuniting Cyprus, stalled since Monday under the aegis of U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, also took place in the U.N.-sponsored talks at the United Nations. Clerides said a federation with separate zones for the Greek-Cypriots and the Turkish-Cypriots would be a "realistic" solution. Asked why the United States might accept a guarantee, Mr. Clerides said Washington had a national interest in fostering stability on the island.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تيمز يومية سياسية مستقلة بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية الوائيه

Arab League to open office in China

CAIRO (AP) — The Arab League's secretary-general left for China on Friday to begin a 10-day visit for meetings and to open a League office in Beijing. "This office is meant to strengthen Chinese-Arab relations," Esat Meguid told reporters before he left. "China is considered a friend of the Arab world." Dr. Meguid is to brief China's prime minister, Li Peng, and foreign minister, Qian Qichen, on Middle East developments and the Arab-Israeli peace process. (Press in China, page 10). The Beijing office will give the 21-member Arab League a presence in the capitals of all five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. The others are the United States, Russia, France and Britain. At Cairo international airport, Dr. Meguid endorsed military intervention as the only effective option to stop the fighting in the former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. "The military solution is the best solution because the Serbs only understand the language of force. Also, in the past the Serbs have not responded to peaceful solutions," he said. Europe has been reluctant to back U.S. recommendations for an international coalition to intervene in the war pitting Christian Bosnian Serbs against Bosnian Muslims (see page 8).

Volume 17 Number 5313

AMMAN SATURDAY, MAY 22, 1993 THU EL QU'DUM 30, 1413

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Arab Land Bank to reopen in W. Bank

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Egyptian bank will reopen in the Israeli-occupied West Bank for the first time since the 1967 war, the Israeli central bank announced Friday. A draft agreement to this effect was signed in Cairo Thursday between the governments of Egypt and Israel. The Arab Land Bank will open branches in Nablus and Bethlehem. It had branches in the West Bank until the Israeli occupation began in 1967.

Tunisian Jewish leader reburied in Israel

TEL AVIV (AP) — Thousands of Jews attended the reburial in Israel Friday of a long-dead religious leader whose bones were brought over from Tunis in a sign of growing openness between Tunisia and Israel, the Tunisian news agency reported. Rabbi David Hacohen was reburied in a cemetery near Netivot, a southern town which is home to many former Tunisian Jews, it said. Hacohen, who died in 1938, was a highly-regarded religious judge of his time, it said. Hacohen's remains were transported via France and arrived in Israel Thursday, the news agency said. The reburial was negotiated by former Tunisian Jews with the full agreement of the Tunisian government, it said. Last year, Tunisia began allowing Israelis born in Tunisia or descended from Tunisian Jews to visit the country, in an arrangement based on a similar Moroccan scheme.

Kohl proposes university in Turkey

ISTANBUL (R) — Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of West Germany, proposed setting up a Turkish-German university in Turkey to help improve relations between the two nations, Turkish business leaders said. They said Mr. Kohl, on a two-day visit to Turkey, proposed the creation of the university at a breakfast meeting with Turkish and German businessmen in Istanbul. "Kohl's proposal is a sign of the growing closeness between the two nations which began in the cultural field, and formation of a university would best serve this purpose," Uzeyir Garib, chairman of the Turkish construction company Alarko, told Reuters.

Algeria sentences exile to 20 years

ALGIER (R) — A special Algerian court has sentenced a radical Muslim fundamentalist leader to 20 years in jail for subversion, state radio reported Friday. Rahab Amir, convicted by the special court in the eastern town of Constantine, is a leader of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). He fled Algeria last year and is considered the group's spokesman in Europe. The court sentenced 24 other defendants charged with subversion, weapons offenses and undermining state security to jail terms ranging from three years to 20 years. Ten others were acquitted.

East Timor rebel chief sentenced to life

JAKARTA (AP) — A court on Friday sentenced East Timor rebel leader Jose Alexandre Gusmao to life in prison, the Dili district court said. A court officer refused to give further details of the verdict. Mr. Gusmao, who was captured last November, had led the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor. He went on trial in early February on charges of undermining the government and illegal possession of firearms. He was accused on ordering a pro-independence protest in November 1991 that turned bloody as Indonesian soldiers shot and killed dozens of demonstrators.

3 face June 23 trial in Hani killing

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — A magistrate refused bail Friday for two white extremists charged with plotting to kill black leader Chris Hani and set a June 23 trial date. Clive Derby-Lewis, a leader of the pro-apartheid Conservative Party, and his wife Gaye face charges of murder, conspiracy to commit murder and illegal possession of arms and ammunition.

Rabin may call Israeli referendum on returning occupied Arab lands

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin could offer to call a referendum on any land-for-peace deal with Arabs in order to woo right-wing parties into his splintered coalition, his spokesman said Friday. Gad Ben-Ari said Mr. Rabin's office had prepared a draft document for coalition talks with the right-wing Tsomet Party which included a referendum option. "Rabin would like to broaden the basis of the government and have more bodies join the coalition because he believes it would strengthen the government. In a time of (Arab-Israeli) negotiations, it is important to have solid support in the Knesset (parliament)," Mr. Ben-Ari told Reuters.

Israeli political commentators called the overtures to Tsomet a ploy to pressure Mr. Rabin's feuding coalition partners Meretz and Shas to settle their differences. The ultra-religious Shas faction has threatened to quit the government over its dispute with the secular left-wing Meretz bloc. Shas' departure would cut Mr. Rabin's majority in the 120-seat parliament to 61, a margin which he believes is too narrow to push through any peace settlement re-

quiring the return of occupied Arab territory. A referendum is part of the price demanded by small right-wing and religious parties who oppose a land-for-peace deal.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said he did not believe these parties could be brought into the government.

"This is a government that is going towards peace and not towards harming the peace process. I do not see any chance of a coalition between us and parties who want to torpedo the peace process," he told Israel Radio. Mr. Rabin has not committed himself to holding a referendum but he has told Jewish settlers from the occupied Golan Heights it was a reasonable possibility, Mr. Ben-Ari said.

The referendum idea surfaced as Palestinians were pressing for an Israeli commitment to the principle of land for peace. Chief Palestinian negotiator Haidar Abdul Shafi said on Thursday peace talks should be suspended unless Israel conceded Palestinian self-rule over all the occupied territories including East Jerusalem.

Bringing a right-wing party into the government could be seen by Arabs as a death blow to the

floundering 19-month-old peace talks between Israel and Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestinians.

Labour and Tsomet, headed by former chief of staff Rafael Eitan, have had only informal coalition talks, Mr. Ben-Ari said.

In Amman, Palestinian negotiators said Wednesday they and the United States had resumed discussions on a Palestinian document setting out their view of what should be the principles behind an interim peace settlement.

The Palestinian draft, obtained by Reuters, sets October 1994 as the date for starting negotiations on the final status of the occupied territories because it considers that the interim period began on Oct. 30, 1992, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) sources said.

The draft is the Palestinians' answer to an Israeli draft which the Palestinian delegation rejected at the latest round of peace talks in Washington. The Palestinians were also unenthusiastic about a U.S. compromise document.

Washington determined to seek Mideast peace — Indyk, page 2. Arms talks inch ahead, page 10.

Pentagon reports navy jets fired on over Iraq

WASHINGTON (AP) — Navy jets patrolling the southern "no-fly" zone of Iraq encountered anti-aircraft fire from ground positions on three separate occasions this week but did not return fire, the Pentagon said Thursday. "There was no consideration these were a threat to the aircraft," said Pentagon spokesman Boh Hall.

The spokesman explained that "on May 17th... two navy F-14s... reported observing searchlights coordinated with ground tracer fire from four separate locations" and then reported "seeing reddish-orange tracers followed by white bursts." On May 19, he added, two F-15Es also reported they were spotlighted and fired upon.

Mr. Hall emphasized that "there was no damage to any U.S. aircraft" but he acknowledged that in one case, one of the F-15 crews took evasive action to evade the tracer fire.

These incidents occurred below the 32nd Parallel.

On May 17, two navy F-14s reported seeing search lights at four separate locations from which tracer rounds were fired at 8:13 p.m. local time, Mr. Hall said.

On May 19 at 12:20 a.m. two navy F-15Es saw anti-aircraft rounds being fired along the path of a searchlight. One of the planes dispensed chaff and banked away, Mr. Hall said.

The Pentagon "can't conclude one way or another" whether the rounds were aimed at the planes, he said. There was no indication that ground radar had been used to locate the aircraft, he said.

Firing at or spotting an aircraft with radar would be a violation of the "no-fly" rules imposed by the U.S. and its allies after the Gulf war. FBI, Secret Service suspect Iraq in "Bush Plot"; U.N. panel on border completes work, page 2.

Gold rally fizzles and dollar gains

LONDON (R) — Gold prices slipped from earlier highs and the dollar gained against the mark on Friday but European share markets declined, uninspired by record closes on Wall Street. The precious metal still had plenty of sparkle, closing in London at \$374.65 an ounce, but the rally that sent prices to a post-Gulf war high of 384 on Wednesday fizzled. Gold was fixed in the afternoon at \$373.25 after Thursday's \$373.30 close.

"People have had a bruising couple of weeks and are sitting back to take stock," a dealer said. "It's all in the hands of the speculators and investment funds," added another.

The dollar was also robust, firming to 1.6255 marks, up more than a penny from Thursday's 1.6140 close. It also held its own against the yen at 110.35 compared to the previous 110.43. "There's been little or no good news for the dollar over the past couple of days and it has stayed remarkably resilient," said a London dealer.

In the European exchange rate mechanism, the escudo and peseta were holding at the top of the grid following last week's devaluations. The Danish crown was also stronger at 3.8276 per mark after the country's "Yes" vote in a referendum on the Maastricht Treaty on closer economic union.

Trading was quiet on most markets after Thursday's ascension day holiday. France and Belgium were also closed Friday. European share markets paid little attention to a new record high by the Dow Jones industrial average on Thursday when it closed at 3,523.28, up 23.25 points. The Dow opened weaker on Friday, off 8.31 points at 3,514.97 by 1600 GMT.

"People are getting a bit wary, that's why we haven't charged ahead," said a London dealer. Even a drop in inflation to 1.3 per cent in Britain, its lowest year-on-year rate since February 1964, failed to stir the index of 100 leading shares. The index made early gains but slipped into negative territory to close 4.6 down at 2,812.2.

In Germany the 30-share dax finished 6.82 points down at 1,610.59 in weak trading with many dealers extending Thursday's holiday. The CAC-40 index in Paris was closed on Friday for a long holiday weekend and will reopen on Monday. On Wednesday the index finished at 1,836.78, down 9.62 points.



PLAYING UNDERFIRE: Afghan children Friday amid reports of continued factional fighting in the day play near a destroyed shopping centre in Kabul, Afghan capital (see page 10)

Israelis allow Palestinians to Jerusalem to pray at Aqsa

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — For the first time since the Israeli army closed the occupied West Bank seven weeks ago, some Muslims were allowed to travel to Jerusalem Friday for weekly prayers.

Israel Radio said that about 5,000 people were brought on Arab buses from the occupied West Bank, joining at least as many Muslims from Jerusalem and the Old City's Al Aqsa Mosque. Residents of the occupied Gaza Strip were not permitted to make the journey.

The radio said that several buses were turned back for lack of proper permit.

Thousands of police were on duty. Outside the mosque compound, they collected Palestinians' ID cards and they entered and returned them after prayers. No incidents were reported.

The mosque, Islam's third holiest site, is in East Jerusalem and is the major Friday prayer site in the Holy Land.

The closure had cut off Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza from East Jerusalem, the Palestinian economic and political centre.

Among those who came to pray Friday was Muhammad Al Rajouh, a florist from the West Bank village of Dura south of Jerusalem.

He complained that although he was allowed to pray, he and the other Palestinians were not allowed to visit friends or shop. "I have a great joy mixed with suffering," Mr. Rajouh, 23, said outside Al Aqsa. "The joy because of being able to worship God, and the suffering because of being without job."

Israel said off the Gaza Strip of March 29 and the West Bank on March 31 after 13 Israelis were killed by suspected Palestinians. Outside the mosque, two Palestinian youths held a banner centered by a hand grasping a bloody dagger. The banner was signed by the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas movement.

The youths wore black sashes over their heads and shoulders to mask their identities. Prayer leader Hayan Al Adrisi criticized Israel for closing the territories and keeping Muslims away from Jerusalem.

"They permitted Muslims to pray only on Friday," he said. "What is the situation for the other days? What is the situation for jobs and education?"

He also said Palestinians were very discouraged with the U.S.-backed peace talks between Israel and the Arabs.

"The land will not be yours. Do not be fooled by promises," Sheikh Adrisi said. Several worshippers said they felt Israel allowed some Muslims to Jerusalem for "public relations" reasons rather than freedom of religion.

"It is a sheer propaganda," said Ashraf Warad, 19, a student



'OPEN BORDERS': A young Cambodian boy from a Khmer Rouge family in the border village of Phum Khamai prepares to cross a heavily-guarded bridge at the border of Thailand and Cambodia under the eyes of Khmer Rouge guerrillas (Sihanouk warns Khmer Range, page 8)

Carbomb kills 2 in Cairo

CAIRO (Agencies) — A car bomb exploded at a bus station in central Cairo Friday, killing two people and wounding 13 others, police said.

The bomb believed to have been planted by Muslim militants, was concealed in a parked car and badly damaged a nearby police station.

The blast killed a 10-year-old girl and a government employee and wounded at least 13 other people, the Interior Ministry said.

Nobody claimed responsibility for the attack, but it appeared to have been the work of Islamic extremists. Earlier Friday, suspected extremists killed a police officer in an ambush in southern Egypt during noon prayers.

The blast appeared to be an escalation of the militants' campaign of violence designed to overthrow Egypt's secular government with one based on the

Iranian Islamic model. It was the first time a car bomb has been used in more than a year of intensified violence pitting Muslim militants against Egyptian security forces.

The Interior Ministry statement, broadcast by Egyptian television, said the blast damaged two cars other than the Peugeot containing the bomb, carved a deep hole in the pavement and destroyed some offices of the government's records department.

Police said the 35-year-old government employee killed in the bombing apparently was not a target but was walking past the car when it exploded.

Some police sources estimated that as many as 30 people had been injured. A doctor at one nearby hospital said he had nine cases, of whom five were critically injured.

More than 120 people have been killed in Egypt since March

last year, either by militant gunmen and bombers or in retaliatory raids by the security forces.

Retur photographer Aladin Abdul Nahy reported from the scene that the bomb appeared to have been placed under a car parked outside the back door of the police station.

The area is near the headquarters of two of Egypt's main daily newspapers and Cairo's main railway station but the street was quieter than usual on Friday.

Militants carried out three bomb attacks in Cairo in March. One bomb exploded in the Pyramid of Chephren at Giza, one blew up under a tourist bus outside the Egyptian museum and the third killed a police explosives expert trying to defuse it.

Militants shot at a car carrying Information Minister Safwat Sherif in April. Fourteen militants went on trial in a military court two weeks ago.

Belgrade refuses monitors of blockade on Serbia

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — International efforts to isolate Bosnia's rebel Serbs suffered a setback Friday when rump Yugoslavia refused to accept the deployment of U.N. monitors to enforce a blockade on its borders with Bosnia.

The decision came ahead of an expected U.N. Security Council resolution to send about 500 inspectors to Serbia to ensure that it kept its promise to cut off arms supplies to the Bosnian Serbs.

It was sure to complicate even further efforts by the United States, Russia and Western Europe to force a common strategy on ending the 13-month conflict following the Bosnian Serb rejection of a U.N.-backed peace plan.

"They (U.N. monitors) do not solve the problem and they endanger our sovereignty and offend the dignity of our state," Yugoslavia's Federal President Dobrica Cosic told British Sky News Television.

U.S. President Bill Clinton met Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev in Washington after senior officials said they were moving closer together in their ideas.

But Mr. Clinton said afterwards he was sceptical about the efforts to end fighting. Creating havens for Muslims in territory dominated by Serbs could lead to problems similar to those in Lebanon and Northern Ireland, he said.

Asked if the United States was embracing the Russian plan to end the civil war, Mr. Clinton replied.

"We will try to reach an agreement about what we do next. As you know, the United States is sceptical that we'll be able to satisfactorily resolve this within the framework that has been proposed."

"We do want to work with our allies and we're trying to do our best to reach a joint position. It may happen, and I hope we can do it," he said.

"Our fundamental interests... are two: We want the conflict to be contained and we want the ethnic cleansing to stop," Mr. Clinton said as he posed for pictures at the start of a cabinet meeting.

He voiced strong reluctance about accepting the idea of creating safe havens in Bosnia. "I don't want to see the United States get into the position where we're re-creating Northern Ireland, Lebanon, or Cyprus," he said, referring to other bitter conflicts.

"There may be some potential down the road for something to be done with in connection with peacekeeping operations but I think it's something we need to be very sceptical about."

The U.N. Security Council has put off resolutions on Bosnia to give time for European ministers and U.S. officials to meet again to try to reach consensus.

Belgrade, previously blamed for fueling the war, threw its weight behind the U.N. peace plan earlier this month in the hope that the world would respond by lifting crippling economic sanctions against Serbia-dominated Yugoslavia.

But Bosnia's Serbs have rejected the plan, which would divide the republic into 10 ethnic cantons and require them to give up territory they have won, and say they will accept only a confederation or will declare full independence.

Belgrade responded by declaring its border with Bosnia closed except for food aid and medicines.

Bosnia's warring parties accused each other of launching new attacks Friday but fighting appeared to have eased. (see page 10).

The head of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) parliamentary arm called Friday for air strikes against Bosnian Serbs if they continued to block a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Loic Bouvard, president of the North Atlantic Assembly to the conflict grouping legislators from NATO countries, said the Bosnian civil war would be the main topic at the assembly's biannual session.

U.S. determined to work for Middle East peace, Indyk says

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The Clinton administration is "determined to devote energy to seizing the moment" of Middle East peace, Martin Indyk, director of Near East and South Asian Affairs at the National Security Council, said Wednesday.

Mr. Indyk outlined the Clinton administration's approach to Middle East policy during an address to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy's 1993-Soref Symposium, "Challenges to U.S. Interests in the Middle East: Obstacles and Opportunities."

Mr. Indyk described the Clinton administration's strategy in the Middle East in including:

— "Dual containment" of Iraq and Iran in the east;

— "Promotion of Arab-Israeli peace in the west;

— "Backed by energetic efforts to stem the spread of weapons of mass destruction and promote a vision of a more democratic and prosperous region for all the peoples of the Middle East."

On the Middle East peace negotiations, Mr. Indyk said "the Clinton administration's challenge here is to turn the peace process into peacemaking, achieving an early breakthrough to peace agreements."

The administration, he said, must counter the "determined efforts by both Iran and Iraq to rebuild their arsenals, particularly in the nuclear and ballistic missile fields."

Discussing the roots of extremism in the region, Mr. Indyk said the United States must "help the people and governments of the Middle East confront this emerging threat, in part by pursuing peace with vigour, in part by containing extremism throughout the region, and in part by holding out an alternative vision of democratic political development and free market economic development not just for the people of the former Soviet Union, but for the people of the Middle East as well."

The following are excerpts from Mr. Indyk's statement:

"Iran has demonstrated its regional reach by fishing in troubled waters all the way from the Gulf, through Egypt and Lebanon to Algeria. Its funding, arming and training of Hizbollah and Hamas have gained it an ability to interfere in the Arab-Israeli peace process as well. And its North Korean missiles could provide it with the capability of striking Israel and the Arab states. In short, what happens in the east of the region can now have immediate impact for events in the west of the region, and vice versa."

"The Clinton administration's policy of 'dual containment' of Iraq and Iran derives in the first instance from an assessment that the current Iraqi and Iranian regimes are both hostile to American interests in the region. Accordingly, we do not accept the argument that we should continue the old balance of power game, building up one to balance the other. We reject that approach not only because its bankruptcy was demonstrated in Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. We reject it because of a clear-headed assessment of the antagonism that both regimes harbour towards the U.S. and its allies in the region. And we reject it because we don't need to rely on one to balance the other. The coalition that fought Saddam remains together, as long as we are able to maintain our military presence in the region, as long as we succeed in restricting the military ambitions of both Iraq and Iran and as long as we can rely on our regional allies — Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the GCC, and Turkey — to preserve a balance of power in our favour in the wider Middle East region, we will have the means to counter both the Iraqi and Iranian regimes. We will not need to depend on one to counter the other."

"I hope that by now Clinton

administration policy towards Iraq is clearly understood. Simply stated, we seek Iraq's full compliance with all U.N. resolutions. The regime of Saddam Hussein must never again pose a threat to Iraq's neighbourhood. And we are also committed to ensuring Iraq's compliance with U.N. Resolution 688, which calls upon the regime to end its repression of the Iraqi people."

"Our purpose is deliberate: it is to establish clearly and unequivocally that the current regime in Iraq is a criminal regime, beyond the pale of international society and, in our judgment, irredeemable."

"Containing the threat from Iran is a more difficult though no less necessary undertaking. When we assess Iranian intentions and capabilities we see a dangerous combination for Western interests. Iran is engaged in a five-part challenge to the United States and the international community. It is foremost state sponsor of terrorism and assassination across the globe. Through its support for Hamas and Hizbollah, Iran is doing its best to thwart our efforts to promote peace between Israel, the Palestinians and the Arab states. Through its connections with Sudan, Iran is fishing in troubled waters across the Arab World, actively seeking to subvert friendly governments. Through its active efforts to acquire offensive weapons, Iran is seeking an ability to dominate the Gulf by military means. And, perhaps most disturbing, Iran is seeking a WMD (weapons for mass destruction) capability including clandestine nuclear weapons capability and ballistic missiles to deliver weapons of mass destruction to the Middle East."

"The necessity to act now derives from the fact that Iran's threatening intentions for the moment outstrip its capabilities. But this moment will not last for long. If we fail in our efforts to modify Iranian behaviour, five years from now Iran will be much more capable of posing a real threat to Israel, to the Arab World and to Western interests in the Middle East. The opportunity to act now, on the other hand, derives from the fact that Iran is no longer a good commercial proposition. It is \$5 billion in arrears on its short term international loans and this figure is growing in leaps and bounds. Iran suffers from 30 per cent inflation and 30 per cent unemployment. In short, Iran is a bad investment in both commercial and strategic terms, not just for the United States but for all responsible members of the international community."

Pursuing peace

"This effort at dual containment in the Gulf is also lent greater urgency by its impact on the other arm of our policy towards the Middle East — the pursuit of Middle East peace. The opportunity that we believe exists for Arab-Israeli peacemaking stems in large part from changes in strategic circumstances in the region."

"After four decades of trying to settle their conflict by force, Arabs and Israelis have come to recognise that it is time to settle their differences through direct negotiations. But if the balance of power in the region should shift again in favour of radical forces led by Iraq or Iran, this effort is likely to fail as the military option appears more viable to some of the participants in the negotiations."

"President Clinton's ability to fulfill his campaign promise to maintaining continuity in these peace negotiations was due in large part to the fact that the strategic calculations of the parties to the peace negotiations had not changed in the interim between administrations. Indeed, the one new factor that emerged

during this period — the rising tide of religious extremism — seemed actually to reinforce the interests of all the parties not only in returning to the table, but also in demonstrating that negotiations can produce results. For the Islamic extremists pose a common threat to all the parties engaged in the peace talks, be it Israel, the Palestinians or even Syria."

"Nevertheless, bringing the parties back to the table was still no easy task. And the way the Clinton administration pursued this objective has established a precedent for the way we will conduct policy towards the negotiations. First, based on our assessment that the negotiations were ripe for breakthroughs on several fronts, we offered to step up America's role in the negotiations by offering to become a 'full partner' to all the parties. This, however, remains a contingent offer. We can only be a full partner if the parties themselves are willing to assume their responsibilities. In this regard, returning to the table is not enough. We cannot and will not substitute ourselves for their direct involvement with each other in the give-and-take of negotiations. If they are ready to solve their problems through compromises which take account of the minimum requirements of the other side, we are ready to act as the facilitator and intermediary. But we will not be the ones to deliver or impose our will."

"Second, the president and the secretary of state made it clear that our approach to the negotiations will involve working with Israel, not against it. We are committed to deepening our strategic partnership with Israel in the pursuit of peace and security. Those who genuinely seek a comprehensive and real peace recognise that this cannot be accomplished without Israel undertaking a withdrawal from territory, involving tangible risks to its security. And those who seek real progress should understand that it won't come without this kind of special relationship between the U.S. and Israel."

"Prime Minister Rabin has made it clear that his government is ready to take those risks for peace. But he cannot do that unless Israel is offered real peace in return and unless Israel is secure in the knowledge that the United States stands four-square behind it. That is precisely why, when the prime minister told President Clinton that he was prepared to take risks for peace, President Clinton responded that our role is to minimise those risks."

"Third, we have demonstrated that we are also prepared to work as full partners with the Arab parties involved in the negotiations. They too will have to take risks for peace — and we recognise this. We understand the pressure the Palestinian negotiators are under and the difficulties they have in engaging in negotiations. But to achieve their objectives there can be no substitute for engaging in negotiations about the substance of interim self-government arrangements without knowing the final status of the West Bank and Gaza. They will know, however, that engagement will bring empowerment over their lives and fate for the first time in their troubled history. And they will know that in the third year of the interim period they will be in a position to negotiate the final status issues under the aegis of U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338. The Syrians need to be willing to commit themselves to real peace with Israel with all that means for ending the conflict, normalising relations, opening borders, exchanging embassies and establishing commercial relations. If they are ready to engage in negotiations in this way, we are ready to do our part to ensure that a breakthrough to peace is achieved."



IRAQI PROTESTS: Iraqis demonstrate against such demonstrations after U.S. President Bill Clinton took office in January (AFP photo)



King Hassan II Acrimony greets Amnesty mission in Morocco

RABAT (R) — A delegation from Amnesty International, a human rights group described as useless by Morocco's King Hassan, began talks Friday with Moroccan officials for the first time in three years.

In a recent report, the London-based organisation attacked alleged human rights abuse in Morocco which it said included the detention of numerous people at secret locations.

The three-member Amnesty mission is the first to hold talks in Morocco in three years since a previous delegation was asked to leave the country.

Led by Amnesty Deputy Secretary-General Herve Berger of Switzerland, the delegation now in Rabat conferred with leaders of the multi-party Consultative Council for Human Rights (CCDH) appointed by King Hassan three years ago.

In a statement issued Thursday, the CCDH said it would meet the mission "in an atmosphere of transparency, clarity, objectivity and honesty."

But the CCDH reproached Amnesty for issuing a report critical of Morocco last March despite its request to delay publication until talks were held.

"The report was in fact a campaign waged against Morocco by a group trying to tarnish its reputation, for purposes other than the defence of human rights," the CCDH said.

"Such a report shows the organisation's bias, which is contrary to the principles of independence and neutrality that any human rights organisation in the world should observe," it added.

King Hassan, in a French television interview broadcast Sunday, said: "I don't see why it (Amnesty) comes to put its nose in our affairs."

Amnesty, he said, was an "old and completely faded thing that has no further use."

Investigators build case against bombing suspects

The New York Times and Washington Post

FINGERPRINT BY fingerprint, investigators in the World Trade Centre bombing are amassing forensic evidence, from New Jersey apartments and a storage locker where bomb-making chemicals were kept, that further links suspects in the conspiracy case.

Laboratory reports from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) suggest that the fingerprint evidence will be one of the crucial elements that will be unveiled in the trial of the seven people charged in the Feb. 26 bombing that left six people dead and injured more than 1,000.

The reports show that Mohammad A. Salameh, the first suspect arrested, handled numerous items in the Jersey City storage locker where investigators say the explosive ingredients were stored. His fingerprints were found on a black plastic bottle of 50-pound (22-kilo) bag of the chemical, ammonium nitrate and a brown bottle of a third chemical. He also handled a glass beaker and plastic bottle, according to the laboratory reports.

Ramzi Ahmad Yousef, a missing suspect who has prompted an international manhunt, left fingerprints on a brown bottle of sodium azide, the reports say.

Sodium azide is a propellant that produces nitrogen gas and is usually used in inflating air bags.

Another report shows for the

first time that investigators retrieved both Jordanian and Iraqi currency in their search of sites linked to the suspects.

And FBI searches at the home of another suspect, Nidal A. Ayyad of Maplewood, New Jersey, have yielded a plastic bag of bullets and a gun clip, as well as paraphernalia linked to a defunct Brooklyn company that had been investigated for fraud, the search records show.

Mohammad Ahmad Ajaj, 27, a Palestinian who authorities said entered the United States illegally last September with manuals on bomb making, was indicted Wednesday 19 on charges that he conspired in the Feb. 26 bombing.

Like four other suspects — Mohammad Salameh, 25; Nidal Ayyad, 25; Mahmud Abou Halima, 33, and Bilal Alkaisy, 27 — Ajaj is being held without bail pending trial in September. A sixth suspect, Ramzi Ahmad Yousef, 26, is a fugitive and is believed to have left the country.

Ajay and Yousef flew here from Pakistan last Sept. 1, according to a complaint filed against Ajaj by federal prosecutors, and Ajaj was arrested for using a false Swedish passport. Authorities said 12 bomb-making manuals were found in his briefcase.

Ibrahim Al-Gabrowni, not a suspect in the bombing, was reindicted on charges that he obstructed investigation of the incident. He also is being held without bail.

FBI, Secret Service said to believe Iraq plotted to kill Bush

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Secret Service investigators believe Iraq sent agents to assassinate President George Bush in Kuwait, but the White House is pressing for firmer evidence, two administration officials said Thursday.

The administration has said it would respond against Iraq if it finds the allegations to be true. But the White House and some State Department officials have been urging caution, said one of the sources.

Both spoke only on condition of anonymity.

White House spokesman George Stephanopoulos would say little on the subject besides, "we have no final conclusions from the investigation at all." He said he did not know how long it would take for a report to be concluded and sent to president Clinton.

The FBI and Secret Service agents began their investigation in Kuwait 16 days ago and have since interviewed the 11 Iraqi suspects jailed April 13, the officials said. Most of the team returned to Washington recently, said a third official.

Based on their interviews, on Kuwaiti-supplied information, and on the types of explosives found in the suspects' possession, the team is now certain that Iraq's ministry of intelligence sent agents to kill Mr. Bush when he visited Kuwait April 14-16, the two officials said.

Scepticism within the administration has stemmed from several factors:

U.S. officials were disturbed that Kuwait did not tell them it had arrested the 11 Iraqis and five other suspects until either late in the Bush visit or afterward.

Although it appeared Kuwait held off because it didn't want to risk a cancellation of the visit — which was a salute to Mr. Bush's leadership in reversing Iraq's invasion of Kuwait — U.S. officials were still concerned the Kuwaitis might have been hiding information.

The State Department also reported that the suspects appeared to have been tortured in captivity, causing some doubts about the veracity of the confessions they gave the Kuwaitis, said the officials.

The Iraqis originally tried to pass themselves off as smugglers, but quickly broke down under Kuwaiti questioning, said one of the officials.

Kuwaiti authorities announced from the start that they would not extradite the suspects to the United States — the United States has not requested it — and would put them on trial. The trial is set for June 5, and the Iraqis, as well as one of the five other non-Iraqis arrested in the alleged plot, could face death sentences if convicted.

Some of the suspects did not seem to know who the target of the planned attacks was — although one told authorities that it was Mr. Bush, the officials said.

One of the investigators' main tasks was to find out whether Mr. Bush was in fact the target, or whether the suspects meant to set off bombs around Kuwait City to disrupt the visit.

The investigators quickly concluded that Iraq was behind the mission, based largely on the fact that the explosives in a car bomb rigged to explode near a building Mr. Bush was to visit were of the type used by Iraq in past acts.

Having interviewed the suspects over the past two weeks, the team also was convinced that their target was Mr. Bush, said one official.

The interviews have borne out everything that Kuwait claimed about the suspects and their intentions — especially that one of the suspects planned to strap explosives around his body and blow himself up next to Mr. Bush, in case the car bomb failed to hit its mark, he said.

As for possible U.S. retaliation against Iraq, options appear limited.

Restrictive international economic sanctions are already in place, imposed by the U.N. to punish Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait.

In international debates, some officials have suggested bombing Iraqi targets such as the Ministry of Intelligence in Baghdad — but the suggestion was not met with wide approval because of the civilian casualties it would likely incur, said one of the two officials.

U.N. panel completes Kuwait-Iraq border

UNITED NATIONS (USIA) — Secretary General Bontros Ghali Thursday called the work of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait boundary demarcation commission "a noteworthy international success" and called upon Iraq "to respect the objectivity and impartiality" of the results.

"The commission's demarcation of the boundary between Iraq and Kuwait is in conformity with Resolution 687 and with the Charter of the United Nations," Mr. Ghali said. "The decisions of the commission concerning the demarcation of the boundary are final."

The certified copies of the demarcated boundary coordinates will be deposited in the U.N. archives and "represent the final and authentic description" of the Iraq-Kuwait boundary, he said.

The boundary demarcation commission is the first U.N. group set up as a result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait to complete the work set out for it by the Security Council.

"Law, technology, diplomacy, and security have come together in a unique United Nations endeavour. All those involved can take great pride in this outcome. Together you have made a strong

contribution to peace and stability for the region and the world," the secretary general told the commission members.

The commission held its final session from May 17 to 20 at U.N. headquarters, approving coordinates constituting the final demarcation of the international boundary. It turned over copies of the coordinates, a map illustrating the boundary and its final report to the secretary general.

"The nature of the task related solely to the demarcation of the boundary and its work was technical and not political. In demarcating the boundary, the commission relied on the most advanced technology, including the use of satellite systems, digital terrain modeling, aerial photography, and tide gauges," a commission statement said.

The work produced "a precise well-documented and verifiable demarcation of the entire boundary," Mr. Ghali said. "Boundary markers will clearly display the course of the line. Satellite technology has enabled the commission to position each marker with a margin of error of only 1.5 cm. This would have been unthinkable only a few years ago."

"Other countries already are looking at this precedent to demarcate their boundaries," he added.

The Western boundary in the Wadi Al Batin divides the traditional grazing lands equally and leaves the historically important Hulaiba wells in Iraq, the commission said. The position of the boundary has been fixed south of Safwan where a notice board marked it between 1923 and 1959.

The commission said that the port complex of Umm Qasr and the waters of the Khawr Zobeir on which it stands have been confirmed as lying within Iraq. The median line demarcating the Khawr Zobeir helps ensure access by both parties to the sea.

"The commission has not reallocated territory between Kuwait and Iraq, but has simply carried out the technical task necessary to demarcate, for the first time, the precise coordinates of the international boundary reaffirmed in the 1963 Agreed Minutes," the commission statement said.

The commission has also completed the physical demarcation, placing 106 boundary pillars and

28 intermediate boundary markers on the land boundary. The boundary along the low-water line in the Khawr Zobeir and the median-line boundary in the Khawr Abdullah section have been demarcated by coordinates.

The secretary general also told the commission that he is making arrangements for the future maintenance of the boundary pillars and markers and helping the parties settle "some practical problems" that have arisen with the demarcation.

The commission was set up in May 1991 by the ceasefire resolution the Security Council adopted at the end of the Gulf war to demarcate the international boundary between the two countries as set out in the "Agreed Minutes" signed by both in 1963. It was composed of five members: three independent experts appointed by the secretary general and representatives of Iraq and Kuwait.

During its first five sessions during which the commission considered the offshore section and took decisions on the land boundary, all members participated; however, Iraq boycotted the remaining six sessions.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Les Aventures de l'Espace
18:30 Les Aventures de l'Espace
19:00 News in French
19:15 Fictions sur
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Super Bloopers
21:00 Perspectives
21:30 Music
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature Film: "Nothing Personal"

PRAYER TIMES

6:59 Fajr
12:50 (Sunrise) Dhuhur
13:30 Dhuhur
15:13 'Asr
15:54 Maghrib
21:05 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swediteh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590.

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terraviva Church Tel. 623336

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 626543.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771231.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772561.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771551.

Armenian International Church Tel. 625236.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823854, 639232.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be partly cloudy and there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain. Winds will be westerly moderate, freshening at times. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 14 / 25

Aqaba 20 / 31

Dead Sea 12 / 28

Jordan Valley 18 / 30

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 26, Aqaba 31. Humidity readings: Amman 14 per cent, Aqaba 28 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Youssef Nasser 751144
Dr. Rima Abu Zaid 894295
Dr. Mohammad Al Azzeh 752971
Dr. Khalid Ma'addi 743500
First pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Aqaba pharmacy 637855
Nairoba pharmacy 626572
Al Salem pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsi pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

AMMAN:
Dr. Ali Al Shugairi (—)
Al Quds Pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Ziad Ju'aitin (—)
Khalid pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630341

Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 874667

Complaints 874111

Amman Municipality 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power

Company 636381

Rt. Police Information 08-532377

Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 08-532300

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6

Al-Jalil Maternity, J. Amn 644241/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Mahmud, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shamsi 664171/4

Shamsi Hospital 669131

University Hospital 645845

Al-Munshir Hospital 66727/9

Al-Islamic, Abdali 664272/7

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6



Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Thursday receives the under-secretary of the Swiss Foreign Ministry, Jakob Kellenberger to discuss Middle East developments (Petra photo)

Swiss team to work on turning Jordan's debt into grant in fall

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan

AMMAN — A Swiss delegation is due in Jordan in October to work out details of an agreement to transform Jordanian debts due to Switzerland into a grant, according to a spokesman for the Swiss embassy in Amman Friday.

The spokesman, F. Beltrametti, told the Jordan Times that agreement on this measure came during talks held over the past three days by the under secretary of the Swiss foreign ministry, Jakob Kellenberger, with government officials and His

Highness Crown Prince Hassan. The grant, he said, is another form of Swiss assistance to Jordan, which is trying to finance its development projects and to promote exports.

Mr. Kellenberger's talks were positive, covering future cooperation in several fields and further steps to bolster bilateral ties, said the spokesman.

Earlier, Mr. Kellenberger was received by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker with whom he reviewed Middle East developments and the peace process.

The Swiss official was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as expressing his country's support for Jordan's endeavours towards democracy.

Catholic bishops end meeting satisfied with common values of Christians, Muslims

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

emotions, lest they fall in the trap of dissension and division."

AMMAN — The Catholic bishops of the Middle East Friday wound up a four-day meeting in Amman by voicing deep satisfaction with what they termed the "positive and common denominators dominating the lives of the Christian and Muslim communities" and by denouncing violence being committed in the name of religion.

"We voice our great joy and deep satisfaction with the very relaxed atmosphere and the justice and equality which characterise Muslim-Christian societies and are guaranteed by laws and constitutions, said a final statement of the deliberations.

"Christians and Muslims in the Arab World are brothers and citizens of the same homeland, and we are deeply satisfied with their interaction over the ages towards bolstering co-existence and serving common goals," the statement said.

The 11-point statement said "politics continue to play a major role in affecting the destiny of Christian-Islamic relationships and that the sufferings of Muslims and Christians of the same country are the same, but such sufferings could be exploited by certain groups to sow seeds of dissension and division among the people."

Referring to the religious awakening now obvious in various Arab countries, the statement stressed that "return to religion and spiritual meaning is a great thing, but such moves ought not to be transformed into extremism, violence and other malpractices, neither should piety become a reason for exercising pressure on others, negatively affecting their private and public life."

"The statement voiced the bishops' total condemnation of all forms of violence in the name of religion because "violence tends to distort the meaning of religion and insults human dignity."

It called on Muslims and Christians to free their societies of violence and to continue to cling to the true spirit of religion and worship of God.

Among the main topics discussed by the bishops, according to the statement, were religious education, family affairs and participation by Christians and Muslims in public life as well as collaboration in dealing with ignorance, jingoism and extremism.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Catholic Bishops of the Middle East Thursday at the Royal Court (Petra photo)

among them. With reference to the situation in the Middle East, the bishops expressed hope that the suffering values lay behind the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and the Balkan peninsula.

He called for common concepts to be strengthened between followers of Christianity and Islam in a bid to overcome the present conflicts.

In an address to the bishops, Prince Hassan pointed out that selfishness, ignorance and preference of material to spiritual values lay behind the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and the Balkan peninsula.

He said this should enable all members of society to live in affection, tolerance and co-existence.

sions, the Crown Prince said the present religious awakening reflects the return to true faith in God and joint belief in the mission of our father Abraham.

The Prime Minister stressed the importance of the role of Muslim and Christian scholars in promoting public awareness and in religious education.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates Yemeni president

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Friday sent a cable to Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, congratulating him on the third anniversary of Yemen's reunification. The King wished President Saleh continued good health and happiness and the Yemeni people every success on the path of freedom, democratisation, progress and prosperity.

Dutch foreign minister to arrive for 1-day talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Dutch Foreign Minister Pieter Koijmans will arrive here Sunday on a one-day visit to Jordan for talks with his counterpart Kamel Abu Jaber on means of enhancing bilateral cooperation. The two officials will also discuss issues of common concern, including the latest developments of the Middle East peace process and Holland's role and that of the European Community (EC) in advancing the efforts to establish a just peace.

Arab-German panel official arrives for talks

RAMTHA (Petra) — The chairman of the Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry Friday arrived here from Damascus on a three-day visit to Jordan, during which he will hold talks with Jordanian officials on means of promoting economic relations between both countries and enhancing commercial exchange.

Police issue 75,683 traffic tickets in April

AMMAN (Petra) — The traffic police have issued 75,683 tickets to traffic law violators in various parts of the Kingdom last month, according to a statistical report by the department. The report said that 46,855 violators were referred to courts. It said JD28,828 tickets were paid in cash to the department, bringing in JD281,765 in revenues. Of the total number of tickets, 58.4 per cent were registered by the Amman police, 17.7 per cent by the highway patrol police, 9.6 per cent by the Zarqa police, 8.4 per cent by the Irbid police and two per cent by the Karak police.



IRBID GOVERNORATE Thursday celebrates the 40th anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's assumption of his constitutional powers. A major celebration was held at the municipal stadium area, where hundreds of decorated cars carrying pictures of King Hussein and the Jordanian flag toured the main streets of the city. A march was also organised with thousands of students as well as people from all walks of life participating. In the evening, Irbid Governor Fayez Al Abbadi addressed a special celebration held at Yarmouk University to mark the occasion.

Specialists stress basic education

AMMAN (Petra) — Participants in a three-day regional consultancy meeting on educational renovation Thursday concluded their discussions with a call for crystallising new educational goals for the Arab region.

They called for developing the philosophy, goals and content of education with a view to enhancing its contribution towards the preparation of new generations capable of facing up to future challenges.

They recommended that the educational renovation plan for the years 1993-1995 be reviewed and that further attention be directed to needs and priorities of Arab countries.

Participants also stressed the importance of increasing enrolment rates in basic education and called for improving the quality of education and methods of evaluating the learning process.

They called for linking secondary education with the development needs and stressed the need for directing special care to gifted and excellent students.

The participants also adopted a recommendation calling for developing methods of evaluation at the secondary education level, developing educational management and teacher training programmes.

The meeting was organised by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Amman office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Taking part in the meeting were delegates from 16 Arab countries, in addition to representatives of the Arab League.

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Tourism rises 46% in 1992

1993 first quarter sees 17,234 visitors

AMMAN (Petra) — The total number of tourists and visitors to Jordan in 1992 rose by 46 per cent over 1991, according to official figures issued by the Department of Statistics and quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The growth in tourism contrasted heavily with the relative low rates of visitors during the 1990 and 1991 periods which coincided with the Gulf crisis and its devastating effects on the tourism industry, said the statement.

It noted that Arab and foreign visitors to the Kingdom last year numbered 3,243,000, compared with 2,281,000 in 1989 before the Gulf crisis when the country's

tourism was at its normal level. The statement said visitors from the Arab World constituted the largest sector of tourists last year, accounting for more than 88 per cent of the total.

But, it noted that Arab visitors included Egyptians who came to the Kingdom for work or for a short stay.

Visitors from Asian countries like Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, South Korea, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and China made up the second largest category, accounting for 6.4 per cent of the total number of visitors.

The statement said that visitors from Europe came in third and accounted for nearly four per cent.

Visitors came here last year from Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and to a lesser degree from eastern European countries including Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece and Denmark.

Jordanian businessmen prepare for trade seminar in France

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in an economic, industrial and trade seminar to be held in the French city of Lille on June 17, according to Mohammad Farhan, director general of the Jordanian Investments Corporation (JIC).

Dr. Farhan made the announcement in an address to a symposium held here Thursday to discuss Jordan's participation in the Lille seminar where, he said, a large number of companies from Europe and other conti-

nents will discuss means of promoting world trade.

In the two-day Lille seminar, Dr. Farhan said, representatives of major investment and industrial firms in Jordan will have the opportunity to meet their counterparts from European nations to discuss prospects for increased trade and joint investment.

Calling on Jordanian industrialists to speed up the formalities for their participation, Dr. Farhan noted that the seminar will offer a precious chance for

the Jordanians to come in direct contact with representatives of more than 1,000 firms.

Among those addressing Thursday's meeting were representatives of the European Community delegation office in Amman who outlined the main purpose of the Lille meeting.

The French commercial attaché in Jordan also spoke at the meeting, calling for closer cooperation between French and Jordanian firms in the transfer of modern technology.

Reservations in enacting some international conventions apply to Jordan as well — say human rights activists

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — So many countries hasten to endorse international conventions and agreements, but when it comes to enactment, reservations and justifications come up and traditions are used as pretexts for their non-commitment to international standards. Jordan is no exception.

"Many developing countries sign a large number of these charters, but they do not apply them nor do they amend the country's laws to correspond to the agreements' stipulations," said Waleed Sadi, a member of the Geneva-based U.N. Human Rights Committee.

Dr. Sadi was addressing a meeting last Wednesday at a seminar on the situation of human rights in Jordan. The seminar, which grouped human rights activists from different fields, was organised by the Arab Organisation for Human Rights — Jordan Branch as part of preparations for the world conference to be held in Vienna in June.

In his speech, Dr. Sadi said developed countries normally take quick action by changing their legislations to be consistent with international laws.

Despite a 1982 Cassation Court resolution that stipulates that international agreements and charters "supersede that of the country's laws" and although Jordan has signed many agreements and conventions in favour of human rights, it has showed reservations over certain articles, out of which

the "largest share goes to women," Dr. Sadi said.

For example, Jordan signed the agreement that bans all sorts of discrimination against women, but displayed reservation on some items that grant men and women equal status.

The reservations included the right of women to have freedom of movement and freedom of choosing a place of residence, to have equal rights in choosing the nationality of their children and in matters related to marriage.

"I don't see any justification for these reservations," Dr. Sadi said. "Women activists in the country should object to these reservations and demand their amendment."

A participant said that certain articles in international laws contradict some countries' legislation inspired from "divine scripts," to which Dr. Sadi responded that draft resolutions for international agreements have been formulated by the countries themselves.

"Even if they did not take part in formulating them," he said, "they could have objected during the drafting process on one hand, or they shouldn't have endorsed them if they are in contradiction with their constitutions on the other."

Freedom of Opinion and Expression

Commenting on Article 19 of the International Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees to every person the freedom of opinion and expression, the

second lecturer, Mohammad Masharqah, cited numerous violations of this right in Jordan by the government, the press and the political parties themselves.

Mr. Masharqah described the Press and Publications Law as one among many instruments used to muzzle the press and restrict freedom of expression and opinion.

The law, effective since May 17, forces journalists to be members in the Jordanian Journalists' Association, which is "in contradiction with Art. 20 of the International Declaration of Human Rights, which says that no person should be forced to belong to any society," he said.

Mr. Masharqah said the law also forces journalists to reveal their sources in criminal cases and Art. 8 of the same law was "phrased in a way that would make it easy to send writers and journalists to prison."

"Who can put a definition — that all people would agree upon — on freedom, national responsibility, respect of Islamic and the Arab nation's values?" he asked.

The law also imposes restrictions, mainly financial, on issuing a newspaper or establishing a publishing company, Mr. Masharqah said.

Articles which grant the journalist access to information are "blocked by other laws that prohibit employees to give statements to the press without formal permission," he said citing the example of Mustafa Odwan, the director of Research and Studies Centre (RSC) at the Lower

House of Parliament. Dr. Odwan was transferred from his position at parliament, apparently because he talked to the press about improving the RSC.

The constraints to freedom of expression, Mr. Masharqah said, include: The ideological intimidation the Islamic stream uses against "those who don't share their beliefs ... accusing them of being Zionist agents," the restrictions imposed by chief editors on writers; the censorship in television and the call for the establishment of a higher council for the press.

"It is so regretful that the minister of information, a former journalist himself, wants to impose restrictions on the press by forming a higher press council; another censorship institution," said Mr. Masharqah.

Women Abuse

Emily Naffa, a human rights activist, pointed out that although women comprised the majority in the society (52 per cent of the population), their lives and careers are controlled by traditions, conventions and, above all, current legislations "that date back to ancient times."

The inequality between the sexes in the civil status law, men's right to arbitrary divorce, polygamy without conditions, and fixing minimum marriage age at 15, are "simple signs of the women's miserable status and discrimination against them," Ms. Naffa said.

Women's participation in the workforce does not exceed 11.5

percent while men's participation reaches 70 per cent.

The unemployment rate among women amounts to 34.4 per cent while it only stands at 14.5 for men.

According to Ms. Naffa, this is discrimination against women, barring them from equal chances of their male counterparts in school, the workplace and salaries.

"Political parties, women's organisations and all progressive forces in the society must exert efforts to ensure that women enjoy full rights, not only through amending legislation but also by raising awareness among women themselves of their rights," Ms. Naffa said, demanding a quota for women in parliament.

Labour Unions

No tangible progress had happened in the labour movement in Jordan, four years after the introduction of democracy in Jordan, according to Yousef Horani, the president of the labour union.

In 1990, an agreement was reached between a group of unions leaders with the General Union of Labour Federations "to put an end to the numerous violations (of the Labour Law), but nothing came out of that agreement," Mr. Horani noted.

He said that so little has been done regarding the enhancement of the labour situation: employees are still reluctant to join general committees rarely convene and major issues and demands are ignored.

Minister plans more self-reliance projects for Aqaba region

AQABA (Petra) — Minister of Social Development Amin Masharqah Thursday said the ministry will undertake a comprehensive social survey to assess the situation of people in this area.

During a tour in Aqaba district, Dr. Masharqah disclosed the ministry's plans to encourage income-generating projects as a replacement of the present policy of paying monthly stipends to needy families.

The minister said cash assistance is provided to some 25,000 families, adding that the ministry has granted 1,200 loans to needy families to set up income-generating projects.

He pointed out that the ministry grants loans of JD 1,000 to JD 3,000 to people eligible to receive help.

Such loans are interest-free and are payable over a period of 8 years, Dr. Masharqah explained.

He called on people to rely on themselves and to set up projects capable of ensuring sufficient income for their families.

The minister's tour took him to Wadi Araba, Rishbeh and Rahmah.



THE ROYAL Scientific Society (RSS) Research and Development Section of the Electronic Services and Training Centre recently designed and manufactured a new educational aid, named the Digital Logic Trainer. This device helps technical students specialised in computer science and electrical engineering understand digital logic circuits through experiments related to course material. Already 25 units of the device have been installed in the logic laboratory of the RSS Princess Sumaya University College for Technology. Yarmouk University also will provide its digital logic laboratory with 16 units.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition entitled "Fragments: Weavings and Works on Paper" by Kevin A. Hluch and Margaret M. Hluch at the American Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Suha Katibah Noursi at the Spanish Cultural.
- ★ Art exhibition by Patrice Pain at the French Cultural Centre.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.

Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Bolder initiatives needed

THE PALESTINIANS' draft of a "declaration of principles" to their talks with their Israeli counterpart and Palestinian insistence that final status negotiations should start in October next year point to the urgency they attach to the talks producing early and satisfactory results. Both time and circumstances can frustrate the Palestinian and Arab quest for permanent and just peace. Mainstream Arabs, Palestinians and Israelis pin much hope on the talks bearing fruit or achieving progress in a relatively short time. But radicals on both sides are betting on the failure of the talks.

The frustration on the Palestinian side is both strong and justified. The whole population of the West Bank and Gaza has so far been under Israeli siege since the end of March. More Palestinians were killed in the last four months than in the whole of 1992. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's policies on coexistence and his declared intention to exchange land for peace are increasingly coming under attack by Israeli rightists. The cautious optimism of October 1991 when the Madrid talks started and the glimmer of hope ushered in by Labour's win in Israeli elections in June 1992 have by now evaporated, especially in Palestinian minds and hearts.

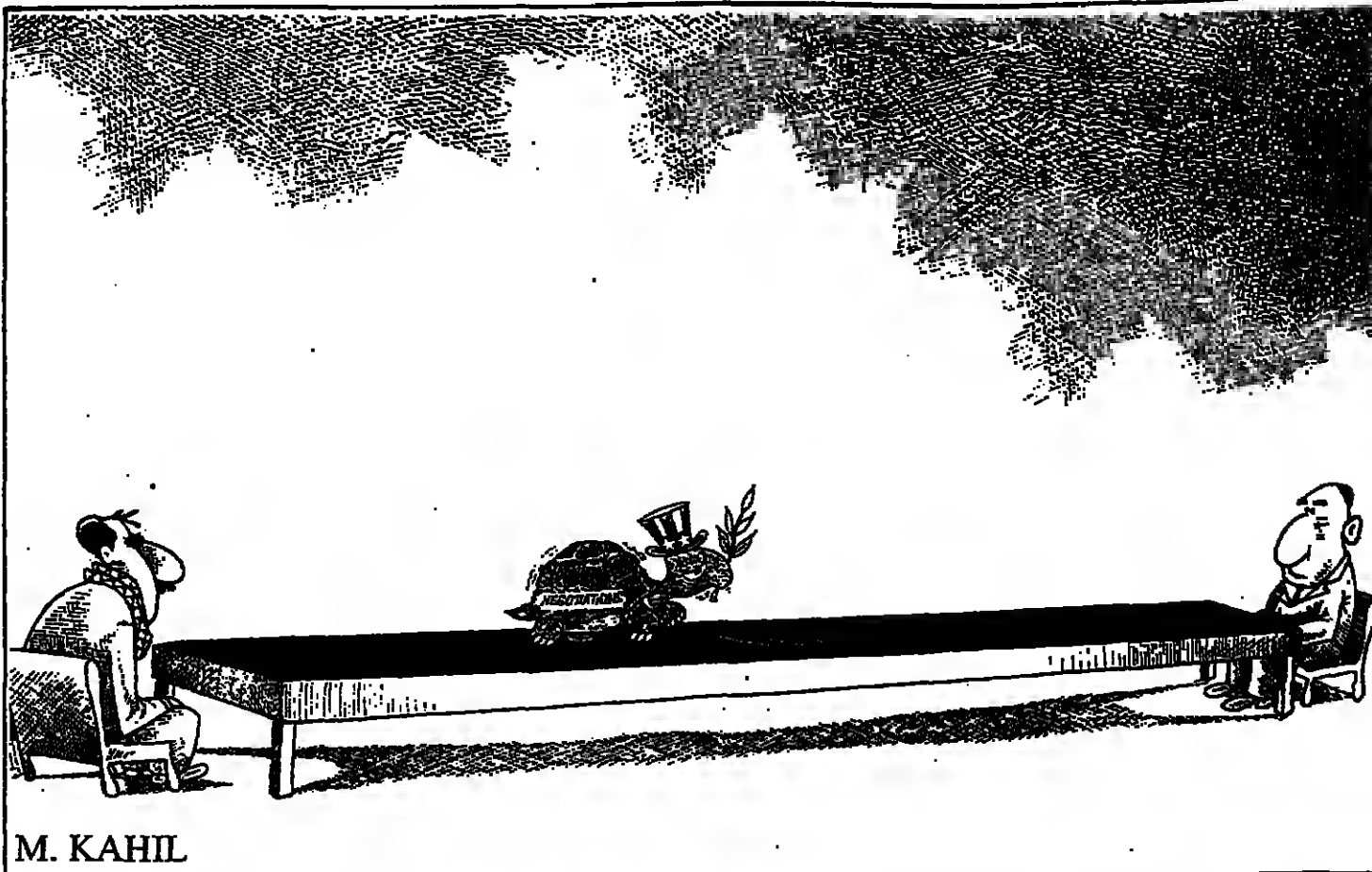
From the drafts exchanged by both Israelis and Palestinians and the pressures that each party endures from its own constituency, it is clear that their two positions are still far apart on some very important issues. And while that is the situation on the Palestinian-Israeli track, some progress has been achieved on the other tracks. Syrian and Israeli declarations and statements over the terms of peace between them indicate that the two countries are inching towards peace. Yet the Arabs acknowledge and repeat that the core of any peace settlement is a solution to the Palestine question first and foremost. Unless all aspects of the Palestinian issue are resolved based on U.N. resolutions, international legitimacy and respect for national rights the whole region will continue to be volatile and dangerous.

It therefore becomes imperative that the negotiating parties, including the co-sponsors, revise their approach to the conflict. Instead of tackling it as one composed of separate conflicts between each Arab party on the one hand and Israel on the other, the problem can for instance be treated as one between Arabs and Israelis. If Arabs cannot make peace with Israel until the Palestinian issue is resolved first and if Israel seeks peace with the Arabs and the Palestinians, then a comprehensive deal must be worked out between the two sides. Such a deal would enable the Arabs to get back their occupied lands and rights while giving Israel the peace it seeks. A comprehensive deal, not separate ones, would even be more satisfying if endorsed by the Arabs both individually and collectively.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL DUSTOUR daily dwelt on the Jordanian-Palestinian joint action vis-a-vis developments in the region and in confrontation with Israeli defiance and repression. Referring to an address given by King Hussein to a group of senior officers in the Palestine Liberation Army in Jordan, the paper said that the Jordanians and the Palestinians seek peace based on justice, as the King has said, but they want a peace that can be acceptable to the future generations. The Jordanians and Palestinians, as the King reiterated, form one family and are closing ranks in the face of common challenges and in confrontation with injustice and repression added the paper. King Hussein stressed to the Palestine army officers the importance, for the Jordanian and Palestinian people, to remain steadfast in the face of Israel's occupation and help each other in this time of adversity because they together face a common danger and no doubt they have a common destiny, the paper pointed out. The paper stressed the King's words that the Jordanian people will continue to provide all possible backing to the Palestinians to regain their rights, noting that perseverance and diligence and closed ranks are now required more than at any time in the past.

MOHAMMAD SUBEHI, a columnist in Al Dustour, voiced backing for the finance minister's quest to impose the sales tax in order to stem consumption and reduce spending in Jordan. Those who watched the minister defend the government's position during the television interview two nights ago are better informed now about the sales tax, which is still to be imposed in the country, the writer said. Those who oppose the tax, said the writer should realise that the Jordanian people must fast for years and abstain from consuming imported commodities so that their country can regain its economic and financial balance and pay its dues to the creditors. Without stringent economic measures, the Jordanians cannot conform with the requirements of the economic restructuring programme nor can they save enough to pay their dues to the world banks and governments added Subeih. The finance minister ought to be supported in his drive to enable the country, particularly the rich, to pay off the debt and restore its normal economic situation; for this reason, the writer said, there is an urgent need for the government to issue legislation or a temporary law to impose the sales tax. He said that the government can later submit the sales tax draft law to Parliament for approval.



M. KAHIL

SURPRISE FROM UNEXPECTED QUARTERS

Group of American Jews opposes peace talks

By Donald Neff

WASHINGTON DC — A strange thing is happening on the way to peace in the Middle East. The shrewdest and most suspicious opponents of Israel's policies are turning out not to be the Syrians or the Palestinians or western liberals but a group of American Jews. They are the former hard-line supporters of Likud, and the rumour they are raising is causing anxiety among U.S. officials and such discomfort in Israel as to make Yitzhak Rabin's government take extraordinary measures to justify the peace process to American Jews.

The actions have included the issuing by the Israeli embassy of a highly unusual paper defending Mr. Rabin's policies against a broadside attack by editor Norman Podhoretz of Commentary magazine, an influential publication of the American Jewish Committee. Podhoretz represents the neurotic right wing of Zionism, that group whose suspicions are so ingrained that they cannot take any good news at face value. Thus Podhoretz wrote in the April issue of Commentary what he called "A Statement on the Peace Process" in which he admitted that the popularity of Mr. Rabin's policies caused him profound anxiety.

"I cannot help suspecting that the enemies of Israel know something about these policies that the friends of Israel are failing to see. I will go further and assert flat out that if those policies are meeting with so much approval in certain quarters, it must mean that they are not good for Israel."

The article, despite its pathological overtones, is causing tremendous ferment in the Jewish community. This was doubly so since it not only reinforced predictable fears that Israel was embarked on a perilous course, but also, because of the back-

ground of the author. Podhoretz had become known through the years of Likud rule for his stern dictum to American Jews: hold your criticism or move to Israel. Now here he was criticising in the very open manner he had abjured others to avoid and he had not moved to Israel to do it.

To make matters worse, two other influential right-wing Zionists, A.M. Rosenthal and William Safire, both columnists for the New York Times, also came out with blasts against pro-Rabin Jews, causing Labour Member of Knesset (MK) Ephraim Sneh to write to the Times that some American Jews were obstructing the peace process. He tartly noted: "They may not have experienced the horrors of war and the tough conditions of daily life in Israel. Hardline criticism from a distance of 6,000 miles will not change the situation."

Another Rabin supporter, Henry Siegman, executive director of the American Jewish Congress, complained to the Times: "It is astounding how far these hardliners are prepared to go in challenging the credibility, and even the legitimacy, of Israel's current government for no better reason than to lessen their discomfort with their own outrageous inconsistencies."

The clamour was such that Israeli officials have been frantically circulating the community, trying to gain its support for the peace process. Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich has gone out of his way to hold at least one conference with important leaders to explain in detail Israel's negotiating tactics, and he and other Israeli officials have been holding face-to-face meetings with leaders of various Jewish organisations. More telling, the Israeli embassy paper justifying Mr. Rabin's policies specifically cited Podhoretz's article as the

reason that Israel felt the need to set the record straight in the U.S.

Justifying Rabin

The paper, titled "The Peace Imperative", went back to the roots of Zionism to justify Mr. Rabin. It noted that early Zionists "envisioned a Jew in harmony with himself, the soil, and his neighbours, both Jewish and Arab." War had prevented this development, but now, the paper said, "the current peace process has created a new chance for future generations to pursue the ideas which lie at the heart of Zionism."

According to the paper, the reasons Israel is willing to pay "a painful price for peace" include a potentially more dangerous security environment, the growth of Islamic fundamentalism, changes in Syria's attitude and the debilitating costs of the occupation. In strategic terms, a major goal of achieving peace with Syria is to prevent a reborn "Eastern Front" in which Syria and Iran would fight Israel together. Thus "an Israeli withdrawal to secure and recognised borders on the Golan Heights would be an acceptable price to pay to remove Syria from the strategic equation and, through economic incentives, persuade it to refrain from considering a military option." A peace agreement would also give the kind of stability to the region that could stem the growth of fundamentalism.

As for the Palestinians, the occupation had distracted Israelis from pressing domestic problems and "has placed a very large number of Israelis in the unenviable and distasteful role of 'policeman', regulating the lives of the Palestinians... If the peace process falters, Israel may find itself inexorably bound to a status

quo of knives, bullets and bloodshed."

The paper concluded: "Israel harbours no illusions that the Arabs have suddenly acquired a fondness for their Jewish neighbour. In time; however, they may come to accept an ongoing development of peaceful relations that would ease their economic and demographic difficulties. This would not only defeat Islamic radicalism, it would also let Israelis get back to the task of creating the new Jew the founders dreamed about."

Washington's view

This analysis, besides the explication of Zionist theory, matches almost exactly Washington's reading of the current strategic situation in the Middle East. It represents an awareness that factors may never again be as favourable for Israel. This includes establishing itself peacefully among its neighbours and at the same time deterring creation of a threatening "Syrian-Iranian Eastern Front" and the growth of Islamic fundamentalism.

From Israel's view, the timing is especially propitious because there is in America an administration and a Congress that would be willing to pay a very high price in terms of economic aid to the Palestinians and Syrians for their cooperation.

From Washington's view, the matter is urgent. As the current contretemps in the Jewish community illustrates, an energised community opposed to the peace process could exert tremendous pressure. In Washington's view, if a resurgent Likud, allied with rabid support in the U.S., returns to power then any chance that Israel will be willing to make the kind of even minimal concessions necessary for peace will certainly be lost — Middle East International.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Press praises government's performance, achievements

Reviewed by Nasrallah

Issues of domestic nature, in the Middle East peace process were given the widest coverage in the local press in the past week.

Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker's government was praised by the columnists in the local press for its achievements, countering an attack by economist Fahd Al Fanek on the government in the past week for its delay in imposing the sales tax and in introducing amendments to the present election law.

The present government, headed by Sharif Zeid, should be credited for passing the political parties law, the laws on the Higher Security Court and the press and publications, and the general amnesty law among others, said Tareq Masarweh, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily. Indeed, these laws can only enhance the democratisation process in the country and open the door for other measures towards further progress and more achievements in the political and economic fields, said the writer.

The prime minister, in his drive to manifest his adherence to democracy, has allowed Cabinet members to take their own decisions at a time when he was in a position to reject outright any step and oppose any move, said Masarweh. The writer said he wished that Sharif Zeid would form yet another cabinet after some ministers' resignation to run for elections.

Another columnist in Al Ra'i daily stressed the fact that the government of Sharif Zeid could by no means create miracles but what it has done so far was great and unprecedented towards enabling the country to attain democracy, the columnist, writing under the pseudonym "an economist," said that contrary to what Fanek had said, the present government proved to be totally committed to the economic restructuring programme, agreed upon with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but that it was taking time before imposing the sales tax law due to other pressing issues. We denounce any criticism of the government which does not contribute towards enhancing freedom and the principles of democracy and which does not contribute to the higher national interests, said the writer.

Another columnist, writing under "concerned citizen," said that Fanek was unjust in accusing the government of lacking the will power to impose the sales tax. If we review the achievements and the activities of the present government, said the writer, we find that it has accomplished in a short time more than any other previous government, especially with regard to political pluralism, economic stability and social affairs, in addition to its stand with regard to the peace negotiations.

Taher Al Udwan, a columnist in Al Dustour, charged that Jordanian women do not yet wish to involve themselves in political parties or to run in force in the coming parliamentary elections. The writer said that women constitute half of the number of university students and many of the Jordanian public and private institutions, but they do not wish to go to Parliament nor do they want to join women unions where they can organise their political activities.

He expressed hope that the coming elections in November will see women elected in Parliament.

Dwelling on women's involvement in the coming elections, Huda Fakhour, a columnist in Al Ra'i, demanded that the coming Parliament be made by law, to include women and that at least women should acquire 10 per cent of the total number of seats.

To help achieve this and enable women's voice to be heard, she said, the government ought to introduce an amendment to the election law as soon as possible to provide for such changes.

Mona Shuqair, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that the one-man-one-vote system might succeed in dismantling the present parliamentary blocs, but would not work against the interests of the Islamists or the tribal system. The writer urged the government to take time and discuss thoroughly any amendment to the present election law with a view to giving fair treatment to all the political groups.

A columnist in Sawt Al

Shuqair tackled the present tendency on the part of both men and women to shun marriage. Mustafa Jamal said that the growing tendency in the Jordanian society is mainly due to the high cost of wedding the local traditions demand, the rising cost of living poverty and unemployment and the high price a bridegroom has to pay as "mahr" or dowry.

Jamal said that such a tendency was bound to create social and moral imbalances, crimes and other social ills.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily said that whole districts and population settlements still lack telephone services, creating many difficulties for Jordanian citizens. Ahmad Dabbas said that the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) is to be commended for its past achievements, but one can only note that the public demands for this basic service should be given priority and should be heard.

He also aired complaints by many citizens who find their telephone bills far bigger than usual, blaming not the computers for issuing the bills but employees feeding these computers.

A columnist in Al Dustour tackled traffic congestions in Amman during the summer, noting that the number of cars and pedestrians is increasing in the hot season, creating a very uncomfortable atmosphere for all.

Mohammad Daoud said that the Traffic Department bears responsibility for such congestions since it can and must introduce measures to ensure the smooth flow of traffic and appoint able and skilled men for the job. He also said that the pedestrians must be made to strictly adhere to traffic regulations to ensure safety on the roads.

Turning to the Middle East peace process, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily said that contrary to what has been said about the peace process, the ninth round did not end in failure.

Sultan Hattab said that proof for this is the fact that the U.S. is now paving the ground for the 10th round. It should be noted, he said, that negotiations over important issues take a longer time than previously predicted and that the Arab parties realise this fact and will be going to the 10th round soon.

Hamad Faraneh, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that the initiative should be intensified while the peace negotiations continue with Israel.

The writer said that the Israelis will continue to prevaricate and the Jewish settlers will continue to escalate their attacks on the Arabs, but the Palestinians have no alternative but to counter violence with violence, regardless of the peace negotiations among politicians.

Mohammad Kawash said in Al Dustour that the United States deceived the Arab parties into believing that it would play the role of full partner and help the two sides to attain a solution.

The columnist said that the ninth session was a fiasco since the Israelis did not budge from their stand with regard to the Palestinian human rights and settlement programmes nor about the repatriation of the expelled.

Salameh Ekour, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab, said that the Arab foreign ministers should decide now whether their countries should continue their participation in the peace negotiations which have proved futile.

The writer said that the Clinton administration has appointed the Arab parties and the Arab masses, including the Palestinians, since it failed to force Israel to implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 799; it hasn't succeeded either in convincing Israel to abide the resolutions 242 and 338. The ninth session ended with no results due to the U.S. failure to live up to its promises, said the writer.

The Arab parties went to the ninth round of talks with Israel assured by the U.S. that Washington will play a positive role this time, said Abdullah Al Khatib, a columnist in Al Dustour. Now that the dust has settled, the Arabs should realise that the Americans can, under no circumstances, change their biased attitude and that they will never serve as fair mediators. The writer said that the Americans will no doubt lose their credibility now, but the Israelis should realise that the so called new world order cannot be imposed by force.

Nuclear threat still looms large

By Henry Brant

MOSCOW — "Ours is a terrible legacy," said Viktor Fetisov of the Mayak plutonium production plant, or "Chelyabinsk-65," located in the southern Urals. "We had to pay too dearly for plutonium," he said of the radioactive pollution and nuclear waste generated by the plant. Pollution from his plant alone is, he says, the equivalent of "20 Chernobyls."

Mr. Fetisov has told a Moscow magazine there are 83 square kilometres of radioactive reservoirs, a contaminated river system and a lake filled with highly radioactive water in the area. By admission of all concerned, it is "an ecological disaster zone." That part of the southern Urals is one of many such zones that Russia, Ukraine and other heirs

to the former Soviet Union have to deal with. The best-known is Chernobyl, site of the 1986 reactor accident that spewed radioactive dust over Europe, also reaching Asia, the Middle East and America, according to scientists.

With Russia's recent decision to embark on a new building programme of nuclear plants — 30 are planned — neighbouring countries and local residents have expressed concern that the government is not heeding the bitter legacy of the USSR's nuclear programme. Safety standards remain a major problem, they say. Last year there were 205 safety-related incidents. None were serious, but this is a 20 per cent increase in accidents over 1991. Moscow officials say safety is a priority, but the need to keep obsolete and unsafe plants on line to produce energy has slowed

progress on this "priority task." Meanwhile, leading industrial nations are setting up a \$700 million fund to improve safety at Soviet-built reactors in Eastern Europe. It's true that the Russians have made some progress, a western expert commented, but nobody in the West would say that these plants are safe, he added.

Recently, demands for more energy led officials at Pivdenoukrainsk nuclear power plant near Odessa to turn off safety systems to boost energy output. The Ukrainian Atomic Energy Safety Commission has told them not to do it again because there are enough problems dealing with the aftermath of Chernobyl.

A plan to build an atomic power station near the Mayak plant that could burn plutonium as fuel and use radioactive water

as a coolant has met with opposition from local citizens and ecology groups. The threat of further pollution and accidents if such a plant is built in this earthquake-prone area is very high, say activists.

Chernobyl continues to haunt Russia and Ukraine. A series of fires at the remaining Chernobyl reactors in January revived fears of further contamination. The fires were put out promptly, and no significant radiation was released. Reports of massive cracks in the cement sarcophagus that covers the melted-down reactor core have also revived fears. Officials in Kiev promised to shut down Chernobyl completely but they say it would lead to "total paralysis" of industry which needs the electricity.

The Ministry on Protection of the Population From the Consequences of the Catastrophe at

the Chernobyl Atomic Power Station constantly monitors the area. Whole villages around Chernobyl are still being evacuated when new instances of radiation poisoning are found. Ukrainian officials say 8,000 people have died from the effects of the accident and as many as 3 million more will need treatment over the next 20 years. In January, the ministry recommended the removal of 10,000 additional families from the contaminated zone.

At least 300 million rubles will be needed in 1993 to compensate victims of Chernobyl and of other past instances of nuclear pollution, according to Vasily Voznik, Russia's special minister for such affairs. Compensation for personal loss is paid by the government, and the bills get higher each year.

It is ironic that even though the threat of a nuclear war has been reduced in the post-cold war era,

the danger of a nuclear accident has increased. Mr. Fetisov says that he is working with officials from Moscow to try to find a way to clean up or at least to limit the damage done in the past 40 years by the Mayak plant, which produced weapons-grade plutonium for the Soviet nuclear bomb programme. Plutonium production at the Mayak plant was always done in a state of "feverish haste," one official said. It is the largest of 10 "secret cities," where the Soviet strategic weapons programme was conducted. Safety and the effect on the environment were not considered, which is one reason why the area is considered the earth's most radiation-polluted region. All five reactors that were used to produce the plutonium have been shut down.

The international environmental group Greenpeace says under-

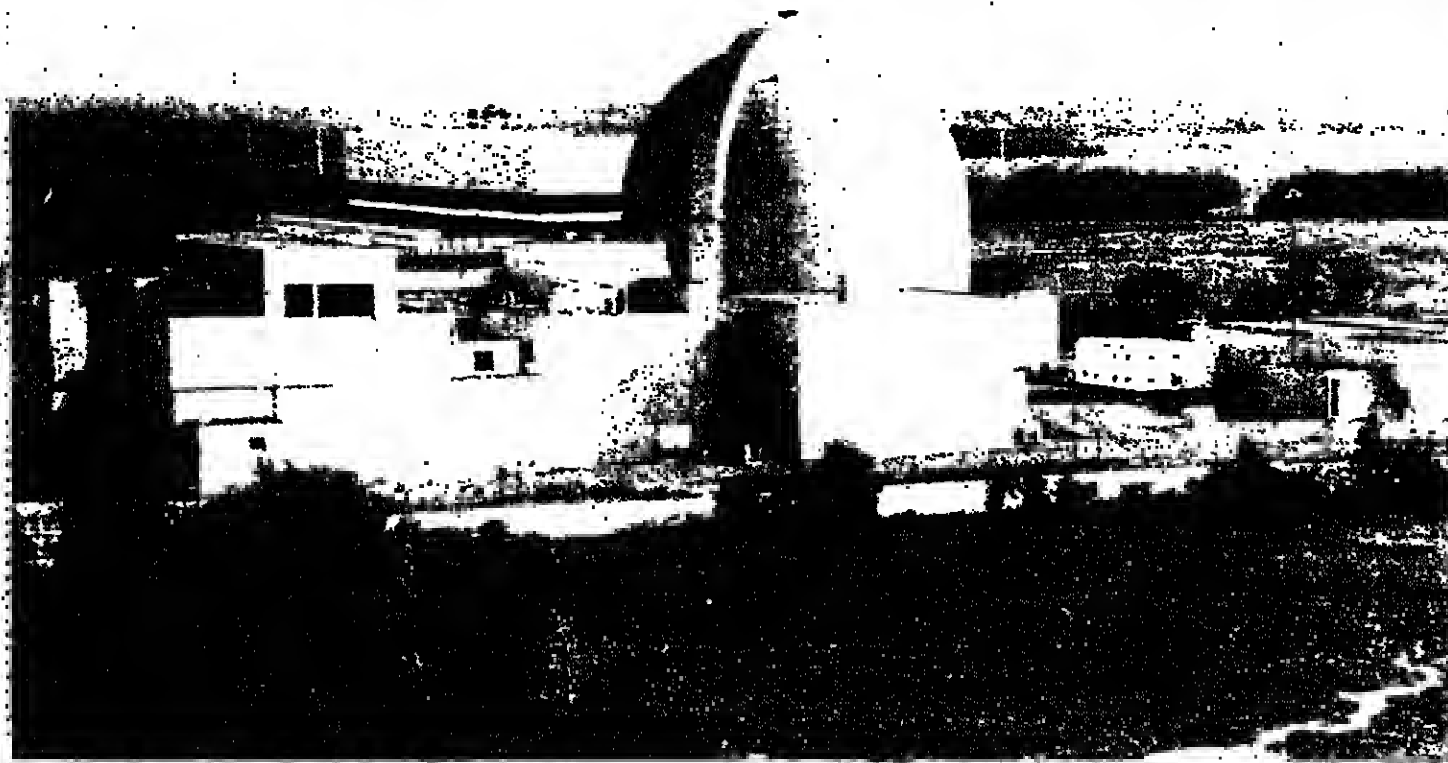
water wastes are also an "ecological time bomb." Russia and other former Soviet republics agree. They have to deal with nuclear reactors from sunken Soviet warships and untold amounts of nuclear waste dumped in Arctic waters. According to a senior scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the amount of nuclear material within some of the Soviet sunken submarines is seven times that of the Chernobyl reactor. Moscow is also discussing plans to seal the wreckage of the nuclear submarine Komsomolets, whose reactor and nuclear warheads are leaking radioactivity on the ocean floor off Norway, where the vessel sank in April 1989.

Karachi Lake, which was used as a dumping ground for Mayak's nuclear waste, is being filled with

rocky soil and road metal. It is expected to disappear by 1994. At the same time, however, an underground reservoir of radioactive water has been found.

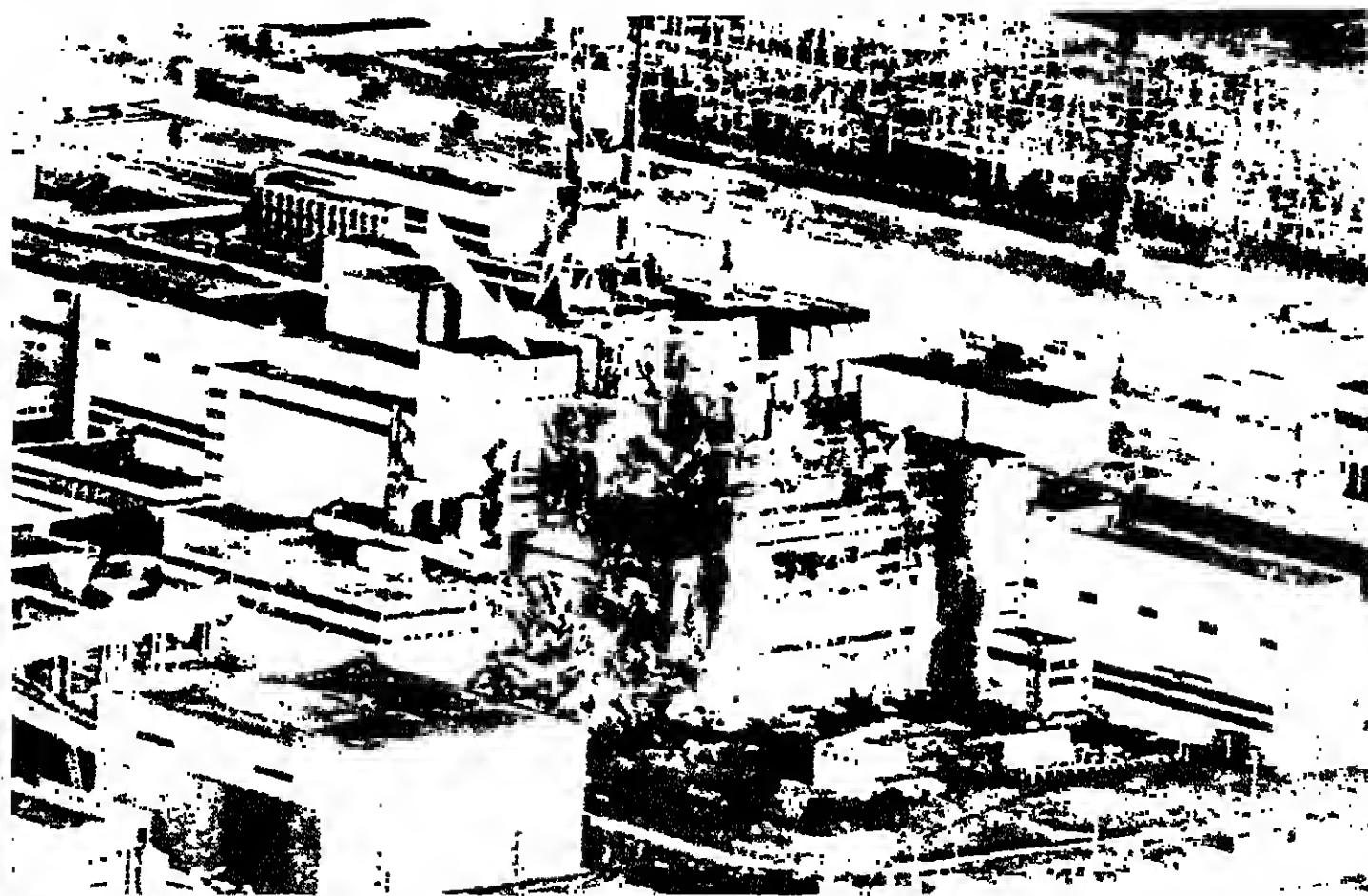
The Group of Seven (G-7) industrialised countries are helping to finance some of the cleanup in Russia and, by providing money to upgrade safety at existing reactors, hope to limit damage. A \$75 million fund was established in Paris on Jan. 27. Japan is also providing funds to train nuclear engineers from the former Soviet Union.

A proposed budget of \$100 to \$200 million from the international group will help, but Russian officials say they need nearly \$700 million over the next five years to keep 28 reactors operating safely. Eleven of them are built on the same model as Chernobyl's — World News Link.



Considered one of the safest designs, the nuclear reactor at Seabrook, New Hampshire (U.S.), is housed inside a containment building with double walls providing 5.9

feet (2 metres) of steel and concrete shielding (WNL photo)



Russia is planning to build more nuclear reactors like the one at Chernobyl (identified by arrow) that spewed radioac-

tive dust over Europe in 1986, with pollution later reaching the Arab World, Asia and America (WNL photo)

Industrial nuclear blasts leave timebomb for Russia

By Fiona Fleck
Reuters

MOSCOW — It seemed like the perfect solution at the time. Blast a small nuclear device 2,000 metres underground at a temperature of a million degrees. The rock evaporates creating a cavern lined with the molten residue. "Some caverns were used to store gas condensate," said Boris Golubov, head of a Russian parliamentary group investigating the environmental consequences of 115 underground nuclear explosions conducted in the former Soviet Union.

"The gas workers could have done it another way — by building metal or concrete storage silos. But this seemed such a simple solution, much cheaper

and above all — instantaneous." These were not the military experiments with nuclear devices conducted on Novaya Zemlya or in Semipalatinsk, in Kazakhstan, which have been well publicised.

These were "peaceful nuclear explosions" (PNEs), used for industrial purposes. Each had a code name and was so secret that people who lived or worked near the site had no idea about them.

Three years ago, Minatomenergo (the former Soviet Ministry of Nuclear Energy), which keeps all classified records on the nuclear industry, admitted that peaceful nuclear explosions had been carried out in the Soviet Union.

This was only after a group of geologists, including Mr. Golubov who had guessed what was

going on, demanded explanations for abnormalities in the earth structure in the Astrakhan gas field.

The ministry handed over a map showing 115 peaceful nuclear blasts had taken place all over the former Soviet Union (84 were in Russia) from 1964 to 1987.

These were conducted in Ukraine, western Siberia, the lower Volga, Yakutia, Krasnoyarsk region, the far north, outside Moscow and the Donbass to extract mineral deposits. About half were in virtually all the main Soviet gas and oil fields.

According to a new publication on the Soviet nuclear industry, "the declassified atom," another 39 were used by the Ministry of

Geology for seismological experiments.

The Russian parliament's Ecology Committee set up an inquiry into PNEs, inviting scientific and industrial experts to assess the extent of radioactive contamination and its effect on the environment and the health of the population.

The explosions were ordered by 11 different ministries. Each needed permission from the top echelons of Soviet power — the central committee of the Communist Party — which signed a special "resolution" for each explosion.

The blasts were then carried out by "minerdmash", the ministry responsible for the Soviet atomic defence industry. "In those days people thought the explosions were safe, they checked the radioactivity (on the surface) and seismic situation and found everything was fine," said Mr. Golubov.

"They told the people who lived nearby to abandon their homes saying there would be a mild earthquake and paid for the shattered windows and damage to their homes," he said.

"They thought the underground caverns were hermetically sealed and would always retain their form. But two to 10 years later they began to deform and radioactive contamination started to seep to the surface and has been spreading ever since."

Mr. Golubov's group is focusing on the Astrakhan gas field in southern Russia where 15 explosives were set off between 1980 and 1984.

Two or three of these caverns started filling with water which has risen to the surface. The ground water is polluted by the gas works and the Caspian Sea is rising gradually, flooding the whole region.

"If these waters meet and the sea becomes contaminated ... we

could have a large-scale ecological catastrophe on our hands," said Mr. Golubov who worked in the area as a geologist since the 1960s.

Western companies, interested in developing some of these gas and oil fields, are seeking advice from nuclear consultants about the consequences of previous peaceful atomic explosions.

"Some companies have come a cropper because they weren't fully informed about the previous use of sites they want to develop," said John Large, a consulting nuclear engineer based in London.

"It's a pretty ill-defined and messy situation in the former Soviet Union," he said. "Very little data is available about these

explosions. We need to send western experts in to check the scale of the problem."

The most uncertain area is where explosions were close to the surface to create dams and open-cast mining, he said, and where doses of radiation are probably most dangerous.

Although the former Soviet Union and the United States signed an agreement in 1990 to ban all kinds of nuclear explosions, experts in Russia are concerned this could change.

"We have such a dangerous situation of overt illegality in the country," said Mr. Golubov. "Anything is possible."

Last year Chetck, a joint venture with a branch in Hamburg, applied for permission to destroy toxic waste, chemical and nuclear

weapons by blasting them at extremely high temperatures with peaceful nuclear devices on Novaya Zemlya.

"There was an outcry from experts, when the project was proposed. It was a crazy business idea," said Mr. Golubov. "I don't think it is going ahead now but the situation could change and in theory projects like this could receive permission."

The last peaceful nuclear explosion was conducted in 1987.

Today, despite the moratorium, they are not illegal.

"To get permission to carry them out would mean top level approval — as high as the Russian president," said Dmitry Litvinov of the Moscow office of the environmentalist group Greenpeace. "In theory it's possible."

Ethnic cleansing between lifelong friends

By John Daniszewski
The Associated Press

MOSTAR, Bosnia-Herzegovina — In a darkened apartment two blocks from the roaring guns of the front line, two youths — a Croat in uniform, a Muslim in civilian dress — speak of their lifelong friendship.

But should the order come down to evict all Muslims from the building, "I'd have to do that," said the Croatian soldier, 18-year-old Gozan.

His friend Dzenan, also 18, gives a wan smile akin to understanding.

Gozan, who is afraid to give his last name, knows what he's talking about.

On May 9, the day U.N. officials said Bosnia Croat forces attacked Muslim-led Bosnian troops in this city, Gozan participated in the dawn roundup and detention of nearly 2,000 Muslim civilians in the western half of Mostar.

"It was my duty. I didn't hit or beat them, I just followed the order," Gozan, who had a 9MM Maser pistol stuck in his belt, recalled Sunday over the din of machinegun fire from a nearby Croat position.

Even after more than one week of savage fighting in Mostar between formerly allied Croat and Muslim-led government forces, it's easy to find people like Gozan and Dzenan, helplessly caught up in the whirlwind.

Natives of Mostar, they had no problem coexisting. But when the Bosnian Croat military decreed that Muslims be moved out, they say there was no way to resist.

Gozan blamed the viciousness of the fighting and the Muslim roundups in part on Croat soldiers imported from the countryside, where the population is majority Croat and heavily nationalist.

"They are extremely racist because they have never met any Muslim," Gozan said of his fellow Croat soldiers. "These guys are like American street gangs. They are in it for fun and for robbery. They know they can steal videotape players from (Muslim) apartments."

The Croat forces appear bent on making Mostar a predominantly Croat city. Under an international peace plan, dividing Bosnia into 10 semi-autonomous provinces, Mostar would be capital of a Croat-dominated province.

There is widespread suspicion that the Bosnian Croats have turned on their nominal Muslim allies with visions of annexing this southwestern region of Bosnia-Herzegovina to neighbouring Croatia.

Most of the Muslims detained early last week were first held in a soccer stadium, then moved to a former military prison near the airport south of town. The Red Cross has been trying to register them and secure their release but refugee officials suspect that

other Muslims are being held at unknown sites.

Croat officers say the Muslims were removed from war zones for their own safety and will be allowed to return.

But international aid officials say they have indications that Muslims are being driven from their homes in what could be a new wave of "ethnic cleansing" by Croats — parallel to the persecution of Muslims by Serbs.

On Saturday, 22 Muslims were ordered out of their apartments and 240 Muslim refugees were evicted from the retirement home where they lived since last year, said a senior western refugee official who demanded anonymity.

"This is the one thing we saw. Who knows what else is happening," the official said. Dzenan was overlooked in the first wave of detentions. He hasn't dared go outside since for fear of being taken by a Croat patrol.

Gozan and Dzenan grew up together on the other side of the Neretva River, which flows through Mostar. When their houses were burned a year ago by Serb forces, their families wound up in the same neighbourhood of the now Croat-controlled section of the city.

Gozan visits Dzenan when his army duties allow.

A few months ago, they had hoped to emigrate together to Malaysia, which was welcoming Bosnian Muslim refugees.

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Japan rejects targets for slashing trade surplus

TOKYO (R) — Japanese officials emphatically rejected Friday a possible U.S. plan to set targets and timetables for slashing Tokyo's trade surplus and challenged Washington to come up with its own measures to cut the imbalance.

"If we set a specific target for the current account surplus, it would lead to a move towards managed trade. I don't think it is appropriate," Economic Planning Agency (EPA) Minister Hajime Funada told a news conference.

U.S. President Bill Clinton is mulling an ambitious new plan to put pressure on Japan to cut its trade surplus.

American officials familiar with the blueprint said it calls for

Japan to slash the surplus in its current account — a wide measure of trade covering goods and services — over three years, just in time for the next U.S. election.

Some said the administration wants to see Japan's surplus as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) halved over the next three years and its manufactured imports rise to the equivalent of four per cent of GDP from three per cent now.

But Japan's Finance Minister Yoshio Hatayama said Friday a current account imbalance was mainly a problem for countries like the United States that have deficits.

While Japan should consider global political implications of its growing surplus, the United

States must come up with its own measures to cut the deficit, Mr. Hatayama said.

Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) Minister Yoshiro Mori told reporters he was opposed to "results-oriented" trade policies — the core of Mr. Clinton's new trade policy towards Japan — and rejected the notion that a strong yen should be a tool in cutting the trade imbalance.

"Trying to correct trade imbalances with a strong yen alone is very, very difficult and the United States is beginning to understand that," Mr. Mori said.

Japanese officials and many private economists say the strong yen will initially cause Japan's trade surplus to rise because it

inflates the dollar value of Japanese exports even though volume may be growing more slowly or even falling.

The cabinet ministers' comments coincided with the release of MITI's annual trade white paper, in which Tokyo once again outlined its objections to trade target-setting.

"Japan has to say no to managed trade," one of the paper's authors told reporters ahead of its release Friday morning.

"We believe it is grossly over-simplistic to see trade imbalance as 'evil' and caused solely by the existence of 'closed' markets," the report said.

Controversy over Japan's trade surplus has ballooned with its size. Washington said Wednesday

its trade deficit rose to the highest level in four years in March — \$10.21 billion — with Japan accounting for 52 per cent of the red ink.

Earlier this month Japan said its global surplus in its current account of balance of payments rose to \$136 billion in the 1992/93 fiscal year that ended in March this year, up from \$70 billion in 1990/91.

"The claim that the trade surplus itself is detrimental to world economic welfare can easily lead to managed trade, result-oriented protectionism, and an increase in barriers to the free flow of goods, services and finance," the annual MITI report said.

The MITI white paper said recent gains in Japan's trade sur-

plus were due to short-term factors, and that long-term macro-economic factors tended to shrink the surplus.

Japan should however, take steps such as increasing the transparency of Japan's "keiretsu" industrial groupings and improving national treatment of foreign firms.

But, together with a MITI report last week that rapped the United States and others for alleged unfair trade practices, the white paper took the offensive against foreign critics and U.S. efforts to set targets to measure market access improvements.

The report maintained that Japan's exports of car parts, for example, forced foreign industries to be more competitive.

Denmark quickly exploits Maastricht vote

COPENHAGEN (R) — Denmark has swiftly exploited a referendum vote in favour of the Maastricht treaty that ended a year of economic uncertainty, cutting interest rates, announcing tax breaks and outlining a new growth package.

The Danish central bank cut its long-term discount and key deposit rates by one point to 8.25 per cent and its two-week rate by a point to 8.75 per cent.

It said the 56.8-43.2 per cent "yes" vote in Tuesday's referendum, reversing last June's narrow Danish rejection of the treaty on political, economic and monetary union, had made the rate cuts possible.

In a speech to parliament enti-

itled "a new course towards better times," Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen unveiled substantial income tax cuts.

"We now have the flexibility to do more in Denmark to break the vicious circle of unemployment," he said.

Mr. Rasmussen, a Social Democrat at the head of a four-party majority government, said the tax reform would cut the top and bottom marginal income tax rates to 58 and 38 per cent respectively from the current 68 per cent and 52 per cent, over a five-year period.

The package, which has to be approved by parliament, also proposed bringing forward public infrastructure investments and

labour market designed to ease the creation of new jobs.

Danish unemployment is at a record 12 per cent, or 336,000 workers, and is the dark spot in a generally sound economy which boasts annual inflation of one per cent and a solid balance of payments surplus.

The Danish Federation of Industries welcomed the "yes" vote, saying it would bring much-needed calm and stability to the European Community and provide the opportunity to break the ever-rising unemployment curve.

"It will not happen tomorrow but we hope to see a turnaround next year. There will surely be an increased interest in investing in Denmark, both among Danish

and foreign companies," said federation chairman Svend-Aage Nielsen.

Danish toy manufacturer Lego A/S said it would immediately resume construction of a 300 million crown (\$50 million) factory which was mothballed after last June's "no" vote.

The Danish crown, under frequent devaluation pressure since the "no" vote, shrugged off the interest rate cuts which stripped it of some of its protection against speculators.

Danish share and bond prices, which have gained sharply in recent months on expectations of a "yes" vote, opened higher but fell back on profit-taking.

over the referendum approval for Maastricht, Mr. Rasmussen conceded that the next 12 months would be grim, with unemployment expected to reach 345,000.

"Without a political effort we could expect even bigger unemployment in 1994, more than 360,000. We estimate the package will mean 40,000 less unemployed, giving us a chance to bring down unemployment to 320,000 next year," he said.

The growth plan immediately came under fire from opposition Liberal Party leader Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, who said it would increase the state budget deficit, dent the balance of payments surplus and fuel inflation.

JVC posts \$220m loss

TOKYO (AFP) — Victor Co. of Japan Ltd. (JVC) has announced a consolidated pre-tax loss of 25.5 billion yen (\$220 million) in the year to March, compared with losses of seven billion yen a year earlier.

The company, a subsidiary of Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. Ltd. and the country's leading manufacturer of video cassette recorders, also forecast a loss of 800 million yen in the current year, which would mean three consecutive years of losses.

Worldwide sales, which sagged eight per cent to 769 billion yen in the latest year, were expected to reach 780 billion yen in the current year.

JVC blamed its poor performance on "severe decreases in both domestic and overseas demand" accompanied by "mammoth foreign exchange losses due to the rapid appreciation of the yen."

The company, which also announced a group net loss of 43.1 billion yen, reversing the previous year's net profit of two billion yen, said it had decided to suspend its dividend for the year.

JVC noted that the Japanese electronics industry as a whole suffered a long-term drop in worldwide sales of audio equipment last year.

"Markets in Japan, the United States and Europe have become saturated with major audiovisual products. At the same time, there is a lack of attractive large-scale products to activate the market and severe price competition. The management environment has become more critical because of the yen's rapid gain," the company said in a statement.

JVC said worldwide sales of video equipment and related products plunged 23 per cent to 263 billion yen during the year while audio equipment sales were down five per cent at 143 billion yen. Sales of television sets dropped eight per cent to 116 billion yen.

The only bright spots were information equipment, where sales grew nine per cent to 95 billion yen, and entertainment, where revenue jumped 14 per cent to 152 billion yen.

Overseas sales came to 397 billion yen, or 52 per cent of total revenue, down from 471 billion yen the year before when the company's sales abroad amounted to 56 per cent of all turnover.

Russia will extract less oil in 1993

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia will produce 350 million tonnes (2.569 billion barrels) of oil in 1993, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin has said. That is 12 per cent less than last year.

Mr. Chernomyrdin's forecast indicates that Russia's oil production is continuing to decline, despite the government's efforts to strengthen the critical petroleum industry, Russia's No. 1 source of foreign currency.

Last year, Russia extracted about 397 million tonnes (2.913 billion barrels) of oil.

Mr. Chernomyrdin told members of the Union of Oil Producers that the government plans to support the oil and natural gas sectors by providing them with a foreign currency credit line, the Interfax News Agency said.

The prime minister, who formerly headed Russia's state-owned natural gas industry, did not say how large the credit line would be. Officials previously have said that Russia needs billions of dollars to modernise its antiquated petroleum industry.

Steps have already been taken to create three major privately owned oil concerns in Siberia which eventually will account for approximately one third of the Russian oil market.

The government also has announced plans to streamline taxation to attract foreign investments and step up investments in the industry.

Rhodium left behind in precious metal boom

LONDON (R) — While other precious metals have soared to their highest levels for months, little-known rhodium, the most expensive of them all, has been left in the doldrums.

A combination of increasing supplies from producers, lower demand due to world recession and Lefty consumption of users' stocks in Japan led to a surplus over demand last year of 54,000 ounces, analysts say.

That sent prices plunging from over \$5,000 per ounce in March last year to \$1,825 at the beginning of this year to under \$1,000 an ounce now, around eight-year lows.

"Destocking from the car companies has met more metal from the producers. Prices overreacted on the way down," said Keith

Green, operations director of biggest refiner Johnson Matthey.

"The (price) floor is difficult to say but we could be in for about 12-15 months of softer prices," Mr. Green said.

Like its better-known sister metals platinum and palladium, most of the world's rhodium is mined in South Africa and Russia but unlike them it is almost a one-use commodity. About 87 per cent of the supply goes into catalytic converters to control car-exhausts, particularly to eliminate oxides of nitrogen.

Rhodium prices reached a high of \$7,350 an ounce in July, 1990, following inventory-building by Japanese and U.S. car makers coupled with reports of production problems.

That year rhodium contributed

about 40 per cent of the South African miners' overall revenue. But last year, Johnson Matthey's Green estimated, rhodium accounted for no more than 15 per cent of the miners' income.

"The producers started cracking up production last year to make up for a dreadful rhodium price," one London-based metal trader said.

"The producers started cracking up production last year to make up for a dreadful rhodium price," one London-based metal trader said.

At the same time demand fell to 324,000 ounces from 346,000 ounces largely accounted for by a drop in Japanese imports from 99,000 ounces to 61,000 ounces.

There is no indication yet of the car-builders coming back into

the market. "Car sales are pretty awful and they (the car-makers) will live as long as they can on a hand-to-mouth basis," the metal trader said.

There is little evidence that a market revival will begin soon. But the tightly balanced rhodium market's traditional price volatility is still evident.

Only last week a temporary light shortage of rhodium to the market sent prices leaping to 975 an ounce from 750.

"It would just take a few more ounces of tightness to take it up to 1,250," the trader said.

And a market upswing may bring back the car-makers. "They always say they don't buy on the way down. Only on the way up, but they haven't jumped yet," he added.

Romania needs 7m tonnes of crude oil this year

BUCHAREST (R) — Romania will have to import more than three quarters of its crude oil this year due to shrinking domestic output, the industry ministry has said.

But it hopes to halt the decline later this year when a new offshore field comes on stream and to boost production through new exploration with foreign participation.

"We need to import more than seven million tonnes of crude oil for our domestic needs this year," Cristian Istodorescu, head of the ministry's oil and gas department, told Reuters.

Romania's own output was 1.6 million tonnes in the first quarter of 1993, a slight 0.4 per cent drop from the first quarter of 1992, he said.

Romania's domestic oil production has constantly shrunk over the past 20 years from peak production of around 14 million tonnes in the early 1970s, mainly due to the depletion of its tapped oil reserves.

But the country plans to end the decline this year, extracting some 6.7 million tonnes of crude compared with 6.6 million tonnes last year, Mr. Istodorescu said.

THE BETTER HALF. By Harris

Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MUIBE
HOCEK
GALENT
BOYDUL

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: THE (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SWAMP TEMPO HEALTH PREFER
Answer: What the restaurant on the moon lacked—ATMOSPHERE

ECONOMIC NEWS IN BRIEF

Singapore remains world's busiest, top bunkering port

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Singapore's port continued to perform well last year registering the highest levels of shipping tonnage and supply of bunker fuel, the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) has announced. Total seaborne cargo, including mineral oil-in bulk, grew by 16 per cent over 1991, to hit 238.4 million tonnes. PSA Chairman Lim Kim Seng, in the group's 1992 annual report. The port registered 81,334 vessel calls and supplied 10 million tonnes of bunker, a residual fuel obtained from cracking crude petroleum, the report said. Container throughput grew 10 per cent to 7.56 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs), per cent to 7.56 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs), although Hong Kong overtook Singapore as top container port last July, Mr. Lim said. He said that the PSA's third container terminal, opened last year, was expected to handle up to 4.8 million TEUs when it reaches full capacity in 1994.

EI AI to be privatised soon

NEW YORK (R) — El Al, Israel Airlines, will soon be sold to investors as part of Israel's effort to privatise state-owned industries, a top El Al official said Thursday. "Very shortly we will see El Al will be privatised," Leon Hasdai, the airline's vice president and general manager for North and Central American operations, said in an interview. Financial investors in Israel and elsewhere have shown interest in El Al, Mr. Hasdai said, but he declined to reveal names. The Israeli government owns about 170 companies. El Al was launched in 1948 to provide a regular air link to Israel for immigrants and tourists, and the airline earned its early reputation by flying to far-flung destinations to bring Jewish immigrants to Israel. The airline's name in Hebrew means "to the sky," although Israelis used to translate it as "Every Landing Always Late." But the delays more often than not were because of the airline's security procedures. Last week the airline reported a net profit of \$31.5 million for financial year 1992, its seventh profitable year in a row. Revenues rose seven per cent last year to \$937.8 million. El Al has operated under receivership since 1982, with the court protection sought in the midst of crippling labour strikes. Investment bankers have advised the government to lift the receivership when it attempts to sell El Al to investors.

India, Israel to set up joint trade body

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The leading chambers of commerce of India and Israel have signed an agreement on setting up a joint business body to promote bilateral economic ties and streamline technology transfers. Officials said the proposed business council would seek to boost trade between the two countries and focus on tie-ups and technology exchanges. Israel was particularly keen to invest in the financial services sector, they added. India and Israel would work out a scheme to avoid double taxation and step up cooperation in scientific research, they elaborated. Two-way trade last year was about \$200 million.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY MAY 22, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: By using your head and taking advantage of some beneficial surface conditions that are connected to the Moon sextile to Mars and Venus you can make significant progress and still keep on schedule.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You are tempted by a person or a condition to go off to some new site where you have an entire change of environment but this is not the day to do so.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) A day when you want to put in motion a new system for handling assets and/or liabilities but it is not to have flaws not immediately visible.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You have a strong desire to tell off an outside associate but it would only lead to loss of an opportunity that could benefit you in the days ahead.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A day which is good to get into the weekend chores facing you and according to the proven methods you have utilised with them before this.

LEO: (July 22 August 21) Think out what you like to do the most and then consider the cost and the various conditions you would have to do, then do it if you feel it worthwhile.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You would be wise to keep in mind that it's necessary to really work at it to keep things smooth at your residence today and even more so tonight.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) If you have some problems in shopping, doing errands and usual Saturday pursuits, blame it on the planets and keep poised and use self-control.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You think you can handle a money or other practical matter now but there are some hidden or difficult factors not likely to be taken in account.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You can be over-sure of yourself today or tonight and miss out where it counts the most so proceed more cautiously than is your natural way.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) A day when there are a number of behind the scenes pressures that are troubling you but treat them in an objective manner and they are quickly solved.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) In following your gregarious promises today, make sure you are selective and discriminating in those you decide you want to see and be with.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) There are certain public duties you have and that need to be done today but make sure that you do them in a well planned and organised fashion.

THE Daily Crossword by Don Johnson

ACROSS	1 Family member	14 Graciously	27 Old Norse poem	34 Former singer	40 Black of offspring	41 Aged	43 Theater stage	44 Splits	45 Smeared	46 Gears	48 Baseball glove	49 Ovens	52 So	53 Upsets	56 First-rate	57 Come together	58 Assist in a crime	59 Freshwater fish	60 Fisherman	61 Toddlers																			
DOWN	1 Atlas contents	2 Melody	3 — Diction	4 Alphabet run	5 Knocked	6 Outrigger	7 Ready for picking	8 Night before	9 Signs anew	10 Gets up	11 Wild West character	12 Formerly	13 Actress Patricia	15 of Troy	23 Grows old	24 Sand	25 Football team	26 Heroic	27 Narratives	28 Seek	29 Classified	30 Was brave	31 "Let's — Unis"	32 Conquerors	33 Good-looking	37 Moby Dick	38 Struggle	40 Dude	42 Felt	43 Man at the plate	45 Sad song	46 Take the lead	47 Commandment word	48 Blackbird	49 Ramp	50 Overwhelmed	51 Concurses	54 Necktie shape	55 Newspaper

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

ACROSS: 1. MARY, 14. GENTLE, 27. ELEGANT, 34. SINGER, 40. BLACK, 41. AGED, 43. STAGE, 44. SPLIT, 45. SMUDGED, 46. GEAR, 48. GLOVE, 49. OVEN, 52. SO, 53. UPSET, 56. FIRST-RATE, 57. COME TOGETHER, 58. ASSIST IN A CRIME, 59. FRESHWATER FISH, 60. FISHERMAN, 61. TODDLER.

DOWN: 1. ATLAS, 2. MELODY, 3. DICTION, 4. ALPHABET, 5. KNOCKED, 6. OUTRIGGER, 7. READY FOR PICKING, 8. NIGHT BEFORE, 9. SIGNS ANEW, 10. GETS UP, 11. WILD WEST CHARACTER, 12. FORMERLY, 13. ACTRESS PATRICIA, 15. OF TROY, 23. GROWS OLD, 24. SAND, 25. FOOTBALL TEAM, 26. HEROIC, 27. NARRATIVES, 28. SEEK, 29. CLASSIFIED, 30. WAS BRAVE, 31. "LET'S — UNIS", 32. CONQUERORS, 33. GOOD-LOOKING, 37. MOBY DICK, 38. STRUGGLE, 40. DUDE, 42. FELT, 43. MAN AT THE PLATE, 45. SAD SONG, 46. TAKE THE LEAD, 47. COMMANDMENT WORD, 48. BLACKBIRD, 49. RAMP, 50. OVERWHELMED, 51. CONCURS, 54. NECKTIE SHAPE, 55. NEWSPAPER.

Sihanouk threatens Khmer Rouge

PHNOM PENH (R) — Cambodian head of state Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who has urged that the Khmer Rouge be brought into a future reconciliation government despite their boycott of next week's polls, has fallen out with the guerrillas.

The prince, due back in Cambodia Saturday from Peking, is seen as the only figure who could create a government, of reconciliation after the elections and end decades of bloodshed.

He wrote in angry letter to Khmer Rouge nominal leader Khieu Samphan demanding an explanation of a five-year-old speech by the Maoist guerrillas "brother number one," Pol Pot, still widely believed to be running the organisation, a Sihanouk spokesman said Friday.

The 1988 speech, reported in a recent edition of the Bangkok Post, said Prince Sihanouk, one-time king and prime minister of Cambodia, "is more than 90 per cent paranoid due to all sorts of hedonism, corruption, financial misfeasance and debauchery and hooliganism."

"I kindly ask that your excellency either confirm or deny these totally unacceptable words of Mr. Pol Pot," Prince Sihanouk said in a May 14 letter to Khieu Samphan.

Prince Sihanouk had earlier said he would support giving the

Khmer Rouge a role in a future government of national reconciliation even though they have turned their backs on a U.N.-organised peace plan and the elections starting Sunday.

Analysts are hoping that the government of Prime Minister Hun Sen will have to share power with the Royalist Party, run by one of Prince Sihanouk's sons, after the elections to prevent a full-scale return to war between the government and the Khmer Rouge.

Prince Sihanouk said in his letter that the explanation he was demanding from Khieu Samphan would "naturally have certain of my future dealings with the PDK (Party of Democratic Kampuchea, or Khmer Rouge)."

The spokesman said Khieu Samphan had sent a return letter denying that Pol Pot made the speech. Experts on Cambodia's history say there is no doubt the speech was delivered.

The prince admitted to having family like any human being, but said: "Mr. Pol Pot and his movement are guilty of abominable crimes committed against millions of our innocent compatriots, including several members of my family."

He said the report on Pol Pot's speech was "the last straw to break the camel's back" and he could not "maintain cordial and

friendly relations" with the Khmer Rouge, for whom he once served as figurehead head of state.

Political and ethnic violence appeared to have abated in the countryside where, U.N. officials say, nearly 200 have been killed in the two months leading to the election.

But the government and the U.N. vote organisers were in dispute over security of ballot boxes.

Government officials refused to confirm or deny speculation that the disagreement could lead to the government withdrawing from the election.

"This is a very important issue, we are now discussing it very actively with UNTAC (U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia)," Sok An, the government's chief of cabinet, told Reuters.

U.N. officials say the government is demanding that its officials watch over ballot boxes 24 hours a day during the six-day polling period and also wants to be able to place its seal on the boxes to prevent them from being tampered with.

UNTAC plans to store ballot boxes overnight in the bases of its peacekeeping soldiers and says this should be sufficient protection.

The Khmer Rouge call the polls a farce that will serve only to



A Bosnian soldier Thursday drags the body of a woman killed by a Serbian mortar shell in the centre of Sarajevo (AFP photo)

Bosnia fighting eases as big powers mull peace moves

SARAJEVO (R) — Fighting eased in Bosnia Friday, and the major international powers appeared to be nearing agreement on new steps to contain the war in the former Yugoslav republic.

In the Bosnian capital Sarajevo, where at least four people were killed Thursday in mortar exchanges between Muslim-led government forces and rebel Serbs, small arms fire erupted overnight but the city was otherwise quiet.

Battles also appeared to have subsided on most other fronts in a 13-month war that has pitted Serbs against Muslims and Croats and the Muslims and Croats against each other.

Attention switched across the Atlantic to efforts by the United States, Russia and Europe to forge a common strategy on Bosnia after Serbs in control of 70 per cent of the republic overwhelmingly rejected a U.N.-backed peace plan.

U.S. President Bill Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev were expected to meet later Friday in Washington, amid signs the U.S., Russia and European allies were nearing agreement on new ways to limit the conflict.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher said after talks with Mr. Kozyrev Thursday the parties were drawing closer together on "very concrete" options.

Mr. Clinton, bowing to Russian and European opposition, has backed off plans to lift a U.N.

arms embargo for Bosnian Muslims and use air strikes to protect them.

The New York Times reported Washington and Moscow had agreed to seek a joint approach with European countries that accepted, at least for now, the territorial gains made by the Serbs.

The goal would be "to contain and stabilise the situation and to put the brakes on the killing," the newspaper quoted a senior U.S. administration official as saying.

Mr. Christopher was to sound out British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd on the plan over lunch Friday and do the same with French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe Saturday.

The U.N. Security Council put off resolutions on Bosnia so the international players could try to reach a consensus.

The Council had expected to adopt Thursday and Friday resolutions sending about 500 inspectors to Serbia to make sure arms do not reach Bosnian Serbs and establish the structure of an international war crimes tribunal to try those responsible for atrocities in the former Yugoslavia.

"Ministers should have a chance to chat with each other before they press ahead with resolutions on the former Yugoslavia," said one European envoy.

The peace plan, drafted by European envoy Lord Owen and former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, divides Bosnia into 10 provinces broadly along ethnic lines and would require the Serbs

to give up one third of their war gains.

The Bosnian Serbs want a confederation of three ethnic states or, failing that, independence for their own republic.

The United States has been sceptical over the future of the U.N. plan following the Bosnian Serb rejection in a weekend referendum, but Russia and Europe are keen to promote it in the absence of any other initiative.

Mr. Juppe told French television the plan was flawed but was the only way forward.

"It's certainly no longer suited to the situation on the ground, but it's the only way of getting a new course under way," Mr. Juppe said after a two-day meeting of ministers from the 10-nation Western European Union defence grouping in Rome.

In the southwestern city of Mostar, Croat forces Thursday released 1,800 Muslim civilians rounded up in recent fighting, but U.N. officials said some were being held and expressed concern over "ethnic cleansing" — the forcible removal of people because of their ethnic background — by both sides.

In Croatia, a U.N.-brokered ceasefire agreement to end Serb-Croat clashes failed to materialise Thursday when the Serb army commander did not show up for the signing ceremony.

The truce is supposed to go into effect Saturday to end the latest round of clashes which erupted in January.

British House of Commons votes to ratify Maastricht Treaty

LONDON (R) — Britain's Conservative government has finally forced its bill to ratify the Maastricht Treaty through a fractions lower house of parliament, after more than 200 hours of debate.

Six months of vicious infighting among Conservative members of parliament, which badly hurt the standing of Prime Minister John Major, ended with a 292 to 112 vote win for the government in the final House of Commons vote on the bill late Thursday.

Ministers believe the way is now clear for Britain to become with Germany the last of the 12 European Community (EC) members to complete ratification.

The bill is expected to face delays in the unelected House of

Lords, where it goes next, but the government's large majority should guarantee it passes this time.

Government officials expect full ratification by August, 20 months after the EC summit in Maastricht where the treaty was signed.

"I've noticed that some people in Europe have been somewhat frustrated at the pace of our process," Chancellor of the Exchequer (Finance Minister) Norman Lamont said in the final speech of the debate.

"But we don't owe them any apologies at all. It is quite right we should deliberate carefully on a treaty of this importance."

The time-consuming debate on the Maastricht bill in the Com-

Yeltsin calls June constitutional conference

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin has summoned leaders of Russia's 88 republics and regions to a conference next month to prepare a new constitution, a spokesman said Friday.

He went ahead with his constitutional plans by signing a decree for the national conference, despite opposition from his arch-rival, parliamentary Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov.

The move was announced by presidential spokesman Vyacheslav Kostikov, ITAR-TASS News Agency said.

Mr. Yeltsin is seeking a basic document to underpin a French-style presidential republic giving the president sweeping powers to dissolve parliament and control the government.

Mr. Khasbulatov has branded as illegal Mr. Yeltsin's May 11 announcement that he will seek to push through his blueprint by the constitutional conference beginning June 5.

But other members of the opposition, chiefly Mr. Khasbulatov's deputy, Nikolai Ryabov, have welcomed the idea, apparently influenced by the popular support shown for Mr. Yeltsin in an April 25 referendum.

Mr. Yeltsin says he is ready to compromise with his rivals and consider other constitutional proposals from an alternative draft put forward by parliament. But he says his version must form the basis of any final version.

Mr. Yeltsin's head of administration, Sergei Filatov, said earlier this week that the June 5 assembly would be composed of four groups.

One group would represent the federation's 88 republics, regions and districts. Another would be made of presidential appointees and deputies. The others would represent political parties and movements such as the trade unions, and local self-government officials.

Extremists triumph in N. Ireland elections

BELFAST (AP) — With thousands of votes still to be counted Friday, Northern Ireland's extremists celebrated a ditch of local election victories that suggest little prospect of political compromise.

Democratic Unionist hardliners on the Protestant side and Sinn Fein, which supports the IRA's 23-year violent campaign against British rule, both put in strong individual performances in Wednesday's ballot for 26 local councils.

Votes still uncounted included those for Catholic West Belfast, the cockpit of Sinn Fein support.

Shortly before counting began Thursday, an IRA truck bomb exploded in downtown Belfast, injuring 20 people and damaging more than a dozen buildings, including the Grand Opera House and the Europa Hotel.

The Democratic Unionists, founded and led by the firebrand Rev. Ian Paisley, defied predictions to increase their share of the vote by 10 per cent to 30 per cent in some Protestant parts of Belfast, electoral returns showed.

With votes in 461 of 586 council seats tallied when Thursday's counting ended, the Ulster Unionists had won 167 seats while the Democratic Unionists (DUP) had captured 98 seats.

Both parties support Northern Ireland's continued union with Britain but the DUP campaign rallied against negotiations. A British government initiative to get Northern Ireland's politicians back to talks with the Irish government failed last November.

Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the DUP, said the poll results have given his party "a mandate to take part in a (talks) process that could only lead to failure or betrayal."

On the Catholic side, the moderate Democratic and Labour Party — which shares power with Protestants on some councils — gained in areas of comparatively low violence while Sinn Fein scored victories where the population felt most under threat.

In the "murder triangle" around Dungannon, 30 kilometres west of Belfast, Sinn Fein council members Raymond McMahon and Frankie Molloy topped the polls in their wards for the first time. The party won five seats on a 22-seat Council renowned for a close working relationship between the SDLP and Ulster Unionists.

Extremists triumph in N. Ireland elections

36 bodies of 132 dead recovered from Colombian plane crash site

BOGOTA (AP) — Rescuers on foot reached the mountain crash site of a Colombian jetliner and recovered 36 bodies, radio network reported. All 132 aboard the plane were believed killed.

The team of Civil Defence and Red Cross workers struggled to the site in northwest Colombia after gusty winds and clouds prevented air search helicopters from landing.

Helicopters would try to airlift the bodies out Friday, RCN and Caracol Radio networks said.

Twenty-nine Panamanians, seven Americans and other foreigners were among those killed when a Boeing 727 from Colombia's SAM Airline struck just

below the 12,300-foot (3,690-metres) summit of a peak Wednesday and plowed into an almost vertical wall.

A second jet disaster was narrowly averted in Bogota Thursday, also involving a SAM 727.

Two jetliners landed at the same time on the single runway at Bogota's El Dorado International Airport, Caracol reported, citing the Civil Aeronautics Agency.

Reports said the SAM 727 had just touched down when an Air France Boeing 747 came roaring over it and landed ahead. RCN said the SAM pilot had to stop so suddenly that luggage came flying out of overhead compartments.

The SAM flight was arriving from Pereira, Colombia, and the Air France flight from Quito, Ecuador. It was not immediately known how many people were aboard the planes.

Police General Carlos Pulido told Caracol Radio earlier that Wednesday's crash site was in an Andean Mountain area so inaccessible that the site may have to be declared a cemetery, bodies hung from trees, Gen. Pulido told RCN.

The plane hit about 80 kilometres northwest of Medellin as it was preparing to land on a flight from Panama.

The crash area is heavily forested.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Spain's Socialists ahead in poll

MADRID (R) — Spain's ruling Socialists moved slightly ahead of opposition conservatives in opinion polls as official campaigning began Friday for the June 6 general elections. Polls published in two papers to coincide with the start of the campaign gave Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez's Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) a lead of between two and four points over the Popular Party (PP), led by lawyer Jose Maria Aznar. The polls were the first taken since the peseta was devalued last week for the third time in eight months and confounded predictions the devaluation would cost the government support. The PSOE, in power for almost 11 years, had the clearest advantage in a poll published by the Catalan daily El Periodico, which gave them 35 per cent of the probable vote against 30.7 per cent for the PP. Another in the Madrid daily Diario 16 also put the Socialists at 35 per cent but gave the PP 33 per cent.

China, U.K. resume Hong Kong talks

PEKING (R) — China and Britain began a third round of talks over political reform in Hong Kong Friday, but neither side held out any prospect for an early resolution to their bitter dispute. Sir Robin McLaren, the British ambassador to Peking who is London's representative to the talks, told reporters: "It is clear that both sides are approaching these discussions in a positive spirit." But he declined to be drawn on the content of the discussions or whether differences could be resolved by the end of July. "We don't think it helpful at this stage to lay down any precise timetables," he said. The Chinese negotiator, Vice Foreign Minister Jiang Enzhu, said both sides were working hard. "The meetings are proceeding normally," he said.

E. Timor rebel chief jailed for life

DILI, East Timor (R) — An Indonesian court on Friday sentenced East Timor rebel leader Xanana Gusmao to life imprisonment. Mr. Zanana has led the Fretilin rebel movement for most of the 17 years East Timor has been ruled by Indonesia. He was found guilty of leading a separatist movement and illegal possession of weapons. "The reason the punishment is so heavy is that the defendant's actions disturbed stability in East Timor," Judge Hieronymus Goding told the Dili court after passing sentence.

Guests flee burning Philippines hotel

CEBU, Philippines (R) — Forty frightened guests and a sedated tiger escaped unharmed from a blazing Philippines hotel Friday, hotel staff said. Reports said several people were injured at the fire in Cebu city, 575 kilometres south east of Manila but Fire Marshall Anselmo Sabellon could not confirm any casualties. One unidentified Japanese tourist escaped from the blazing 140-room Magellan Hotel by sliding down a water pipe from a fourth floor window. Several other guests, also believed to be Japanese, were seen jumping into the hotel swimming pool, witnesses said. "There were 40 guests at the time but all of them were taken to safety," hotel spokeswoman Ana Conejero said. She said a tiger named Abu which was kept in a cage outside the Lasang (Jungle) Discotheque in the hotel basement was also evacuated but had to be tranquilised first with an injection.

Strong earthquake shakes Tokyo

TOKYO (R) — A strong earthquake registering a preliminary 5.2 on the Richter Scale jolted downtown Tokyo Friday, causing high buildings to sway and joggle for several minutes. There were no immediate reports of serious damage or injuries. High-speed bullet trains in the area surrounding Tokyo were temporarily halted and Tokyo's Haneda Airport briefly closed three runways to check for damage, but there were no other reports of disruption to transportation networks. The earthquake struck at 11:36 a.m. (0236 GMT). There was no immediate danger of tsunami seismic waves, the Central Meteorological Agency said. The agency said the quake's epicentre was located roughly 60 kilometres below ground in southwestern Ibaraki prefecture (state), a largely rural area.

Singer to reject contestants who've had plastic surgery

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Singer Maria Conchita Alonso, who will be among the judges of the Miss Universe 1993 contest, says she'll vote against any beauty contestant she knows has undergone plastic surgery. "One can undergo operations to improve certain parts of their body, but not to participate in a contest like this," said Ms. Alonso, who once represented Venezuela in the competition. "I personally am against it." "To be able to reach the Miss Universe contest after undergoing plastic surgery is dishonest," she said this week as the festivities leading up to the final event drew to a close. Fellow juror Jose Luis Cuevas, a Mexican painter, said that if any contestant wins with the help of plastic surgery, "we should give the prize to the plastic surgeon." Plastic surgery is not prohibited by the Miss Universe Contest. Also on the jury will be Luptal Jones, Miss Universe 1991, who recently published book "Palabras De Reina" — Words Of The Queen — an insider's look at the contest. On Monday, the jury selected 10 semi-finalists from among 79 candidates from around the world but their names still remain secret. Still, the public and press have come up with some favourites: Miss Venezuela Milka Chulina, 19, Miss Guatemala Diana Galvan, 19; Miss Mexico Angelina Gonzalez, 18; Miss Brazil Leila Schuster, 21; Miss Ghana Jamila Haruna, 25; and Miss Spain Eugenia Santana, 19. On Monday night, Miss Venezuela received a \$1,000 check for being the contestant with "the most beautiful hair."

Cheers ends 11-year run with philosophical flair

BOSTON, Massachusetts (R) — Sam doesn't marry Diane, but discovers true love. Norm nearly confesses beer isn't the most important thing in his life. And Cliff well, some things never change. Cheers ended its 11-year run Thursday night as one of the most popular and critically-acclaimed series in U.S. television without the finality some fans had expected, but with a message timed for the 90s — that family is where you find it. Sam Malone, the roguish playboy whose coiffure and little black book were his most prized possessions — in that order — renounces the aborted romance he'd had with Diane Chambers years before. But they both realise it was not meant to be, and part. Norm Peterson, who ran up a beer tab rivaling the U.S. national debt and was usually his most profound when admitting he wouldn't know what to do — "first" — if he lost his wife, gawked as his parting shot a soulful remark about true love. "You always come back to her," Peterson said with a grin as Malone searches for meaning in his life — meaning he realises he has in the company of his friends. "I'm the luckiest son of a bitch on earth," Malone says to himself in the empty bar. When Cheers first aired on Sept. 30, 1992, it did not immediately catch fire. It ranked 74th in its first year and did not become a season's number one hit until 1989. Based on a real neighbourhood bar in Boston, the Bull And Finch Pub, Cheers was nominated for 11 Emmy Awards, the most ever garnered by a programme, and won 26 — three shy of the record set by The Mary Tyler Moore Show.

Clinton's haircut shuts down 2 runways

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. President Bill Clinton sat aboard Air Force One on a Los Angeles runway having his hair cut, shutting down two runways for almost an hour and forcing an incoming flight to circle the airport for 17 minutes. But the White House insisted that Tuesday's hair-trimming session, dubbed "hair force one" by the Washington Post, did not betray Mr. Clinton's image as a common man. "The president has to get his hair cut like everybody else has to get their hair cut," said spokesman George Stephanopoulos, who noted Mr. Clinton has a "very busy schedule."

Major gets damages over libel article

LONDON (R) — W.H. Smith, Britain's nationwide chain of bookshops and newsagents, said it had paid damages to Prime Minister John Major for having sold a magazine that alleged he had an affair. Mr. Major, 49, and caterer Clare Latimer, 41, brought separate libel actions over the article, which appeared in February in the New Statesman (Colchester) Ltd, printers of the magazine, its distributors Comags and newsagents John Menzies apologised in court and paid undisclosed damages to Mr. Major and Latimer earlier this year.



Carlos Andres Perez

Venezuela court rules that president must stand trial

CARACAS (R) — Venezuela's Supreme Court has ruled that President Carlos Andres Perez, a survivor of coup attempts, riots and political feuds, must stand trial on corruption charges in an unprecedented decision likely to suspend him.

A ruling by the Supreme Court to try the widely unpopular president on embezzlement and misuse of public funds charges sparked jubilant street celebrations among Venezuelans long angered by widespread corruption in this oil-exporting nation.

The Senate was due to meet Friday, to vote whether to approve the court's decision and send Mr. Perez and two former ministers to trial.

Chief Justice Gonzalo Rodriguez Corzo said judges ruled 9-0, with six abstentions, to support the charges brought by public prosecutor Ramon Escovar Salom last March.

"The court agreed with the petition of trial against President Carlos Andres Perez and former ministers Reinaldo Figueredo and Alejandro Izaguirre," Mr. Rodriguez Corzo said.

Venezuelans erupted immediately in celebration, honking horns, banging kitchen pots and exploding firecrackers in a cathartic and peaceful expression of joy in one of the oldest democracies in the region.

"This is a historic decision that will satisfy the people's thirst for justice," said Leonardo Padilla,

25, a university student. "We are optimistic, we are happy and we will begin to move forward starting right now."

They also chanted the name of Lieutenant Colonel Hugo Chavez Frias, who led the February 1992 coup attempt in what he said was an effort to save Venezuelans from poverty and corruption.

"Chavez was right. Perez is a crook," one student shouted outside Congress.

Mr. Perez, 70, who would be the first president in 35 years of democracy to be forced from office, told cabinet ministers to remain in their posts to make the process less "traumatic" for the country, one minister told Reuters.

"The transition period should be the least traumatic possible and we must cooperate to ensure this," the minister, who requested anonymity, quoted Mr. Perez as saying.

Earlier, Information Minister Angel Zambrano said the cabinet had resigned to let Mr. Perez's replacement have the option of selecting a new governing team, but would remain in their posts for now.

The decision came only seven months before general elections in Venezuela, in which Mr. Perez cannot run.

If, as expected, the Senate upholds the court's decision Mr. Perez will be suspended from power under the constitution and stand trial in the Supreme Court,

purchase with local currency of \$17 million at a preferential rate and sale in the free market for about \$10 million in profit.

The government has denied the charges but declined to specify how the funds were spent since they came from a classified account used for state security.

The charges against Mr. Perez became a focal point for Venezuelan public anger over perceptions of widespread corruption in high places.

The Venezuelan leader has drawn parallels between himself and the former president of neighbouring Brazil, Fernando Collor De Mello, who fell from power on corruption charges last year.

Mr. Perez has often been on the defensive since implementing reforms in 1989 that scrapped subsidies and in turn increased prices, sharply reducing the standard of living of Venezuelans used to a paternalistic system of government handouts.

The subsidies were leftovers from an era of wealth two decades ago when this member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) reaped the benefits of an oil boom.

It suspended by the Senate, Mr. Perez must cede all powers to his interim replacement but would continue to hold the official position of president and continue to live in the presidential La Casona residence.

Sports

2nd Division Basketball Championship

Abbasi face Homentmen in final match Sunday

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Second Division Basketball Championship comes to an end Sunday when Abbasi and Homentmen clash in the final of the competition organised by the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF).

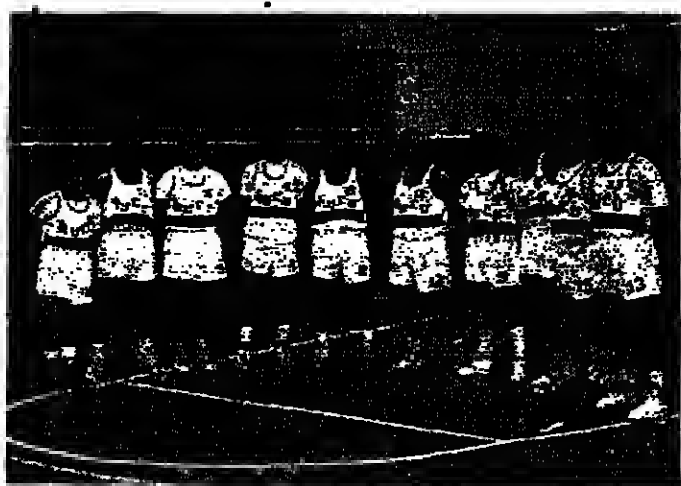
Homentmen are well on their way to returning to the First Division as they won both their matches in the second round of the championship, defeating Yarmouk Amman 68-50 and Gazet Hashem 75-67. They had also maintained an unbeaten streak in the first round before losing to Abbasi in the first round final 58-57.

Abbasi on the other hand, seem to have lost their momentum in the second round as they were upset by Yarmouk Amman 76-74 and later had difficulty overcoming Gazet Hashem 68-56, after the latter won the first half 34-26.

Homentmen now lead the standings with 4 points and will secure promotion to the First Division if they beat Abbasi, or even lose by less than 18 points.

Yarmouk Amman — who had finished fourth in the overall standings of the first round — were ecstatic after overcoming Abbasi earlier in the week, and felt confident of defeating Homentmen Thursday to stage a big upset of former First Division teams.

That was not the case however in Yarmouk's match against Homentmen at the Sports Palace Court, as Yarmouk could only keep up with their opponents at the beginning of the first half. Homentmen's Vasken Adjemian and



Homentmen's team

Ibrahim Tadros scored 11 consecutive points, however scoring remained close with Homentmen leading 22-16 with 11 minutes remaining.

Homentmen substituted injured Vicken Avkian by Ali's Abu Rahmeh, who scored defensive rebounding, scored and assisted his teammates Robert Chatmajian, and Adjemian who scored to widen their team's lead to 33-16.

Yarmouk did not score for nearly five minutes, before they added 7 consecutive points to narrow the gap to 35-25. Homentmen won the first half 42-27.

In the second half Homent-

men took advantage of Yarmouk's lack of fitness as they continued to score and established a commanding 60-35 lead.

Yarmouk battered Homentmen by a big number of fouls and thus managed to outscore their opponents 15-8 in the final minutes of the match and narrowed the gap to give Homentmen a 68-50 win.

The final match Sunday will be held at 7 p.m. at the Sports Palace court, and will be preceded by the Yarmouk Amman — Gazet Hashem match.

Only one team will be promoted to the First Division this season.

Standings

Team	P	W	L	PF	SA	Pts
Homentmen	2	2	—	143	117	4
Abbasi	2	1	1	142	132	3
Yarmouk Amman	2	1	1	126	142	3
Gazet Hashem	2	—	—	123	143	2

Group A World Cup preliminaries begin today

AMMAN (J.T.) — The first round of Group A World Cup preliminary matches begin Saturday at Al Hassan Sports City in Irbid.

The opening ceremony, held under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein, will begin at 4 p.m. It will be followed by the opening match in which Jordan plays Yemen.

In the second match of the day, Pakistan faces China at 8:30 p.m.

The first round continues until May 30. The second leg of the first round will be played in Chengdu, China starting June 12.

Suns win series

SAN ANTONIO (R) — Charles Barkley hit a jumper from the top of the key with 1.8 seconds left to give Phoenix a 102-100 victory over the San Antonio Spurs Thursday, moving the Suns into the Western Conference finals.

The Suns won the best-of-seven series 4-2 to reach the Western Finals for the first time since 1990.

They will play the winner of the Houston-Seattle series, which was locked at 3-3 after the Houston Rockets beat the SuperSonics 103-90 in their game six.

Phoenix was leading 99-98 following Dale Ellis's three-pointer for the Spurs with 14.5 seconds to go when Danny Ainge went to the free throw line with a chance to put the Suns up three.

Ainge made the first but missed the second and Barkley committed a loose ball foul on David Robinson. Robinson made both free throws with 11 seconds to go to tie the game and set the stage for Barkley.

Barkley finished with 26 points, 21 rebounds, four assists and four steals. Dan Majerle and Kevin Johnson added 18 points each for the Suns.

Robinson, who had a desperation shot blocked at the buzzer, led the Spurs with 22 points and 14 rebounds and Sean Elliott added 19 points and 11 rebounds.

San Antonio, which lost at home in the playoffs for the first time after four victories, played without forward Antoine Carr who had a sprained ankle.

Barkley, who had 36 points in the Suns' game five victory, responded with a three-point play to begin a 12-0 run that put Phoenix ahead 88-86. Tom Chambers scored six points during the outburst.

J.R. Reid scored inside and Robinson hit one of two free throws to put San Antonio back in front.

In Houston, a red-hot Kenny Smith scored a career playoff-high 30 points and Houston outscored Seattle 36-15 in the third quarter to break the game open.

Smith hit 13 of 16 shots and did not commit a turnover as the Rockets continued the pattern that has seen the home team win every game of this series.

Chris Thorpe added 18 points and 10 rebounds for Houston. Shawn Kemp, who was in foul trouble with five personals, scored only one point and missed both his shots from field in 26 minutes.

The Rockets had a 67-60 lead and scored the next 10 points to take control of the contest with one minute left in the period. Vernon Maxwell, who scored 15 points, hit a 35-foot three-pointer as the 24-second clock expired to start the 10-0 burst.

Smith and Olajuwon hit field goals and Smith then capped the burst with a three-pointer.

Olajuwon finished with 14 points and 10 rebounds and Robert Horry added 15 points as every Houston starter scored in double figures.

Countdown begins for May 27-28 Jordan International Rally

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Competition in the 1993 Jordan International Rally — one of the rounds of the Middle East Rally Championship — promises to be an exciting and challenging event, as 46 competitors will fight it out in a two-day battle of endurance.

His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Al Hussein will give the start signal of the rally, as competitors set off from the Roman amphitheatre in Downtown Amman, Thursday May 27 at 4 p.m.

There will be 22 special stages making up 400 kilometres of the 970-kilometre rally. The first day of the rally will be on asphalt roads north of the Kingdom. This leg will feature 11 special stages, the first one being at Marsa' north of Shafa Badran. Cars will then head north towards Masarra, Ras Al Aqra, Soof and Kufr Khal before the first car is due at the Jerash service and regrouping halt by 7.43 p.m.

The restart will be from the Jerash Resthouse at 8:30 p.m. as competitors drive through the six remaining special stages of the first leg, passing through Ras Al Aqra, Soof, Kufr Khal, Masarra, Marsa' and Rumeimen.

The first car is due at the Forte Grand Hotel in Amman — the rally's headquarters — at 1 p.m. Friday.

The second leg of the rally will start at 9 a.m. Friday, and will take drivers through the remaining 11 special stages in the desert areas south of the country. The start will be from the Forte Grand Hotel towards the 12th special stage at Tunah near Queen Alia International Airport. Competitors will then

head south to Swaqa and Hafira near Qatana, then to Hasa and Fajet before reaching the Petra Forum Hotel for service and regrouping. The restart will be at 3.30 p.m. passing through Beikha, Fajet, Hasa, Hafira, Swaqa and Tunah. The first car is due at the finish ramp at the Forte Grand Hotel at 9.15 p.m.

Rally organisers — the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) — are now putting the finishing touches on the minor details of the most prestigious auto sports event in the country, sponsored by Gold Coast.

Organisers seemed happy with arrangements, organisation and number of entries. Deputy clerk of the course, Ziad Louza, said that this year's rally will be "an entirely national effort."

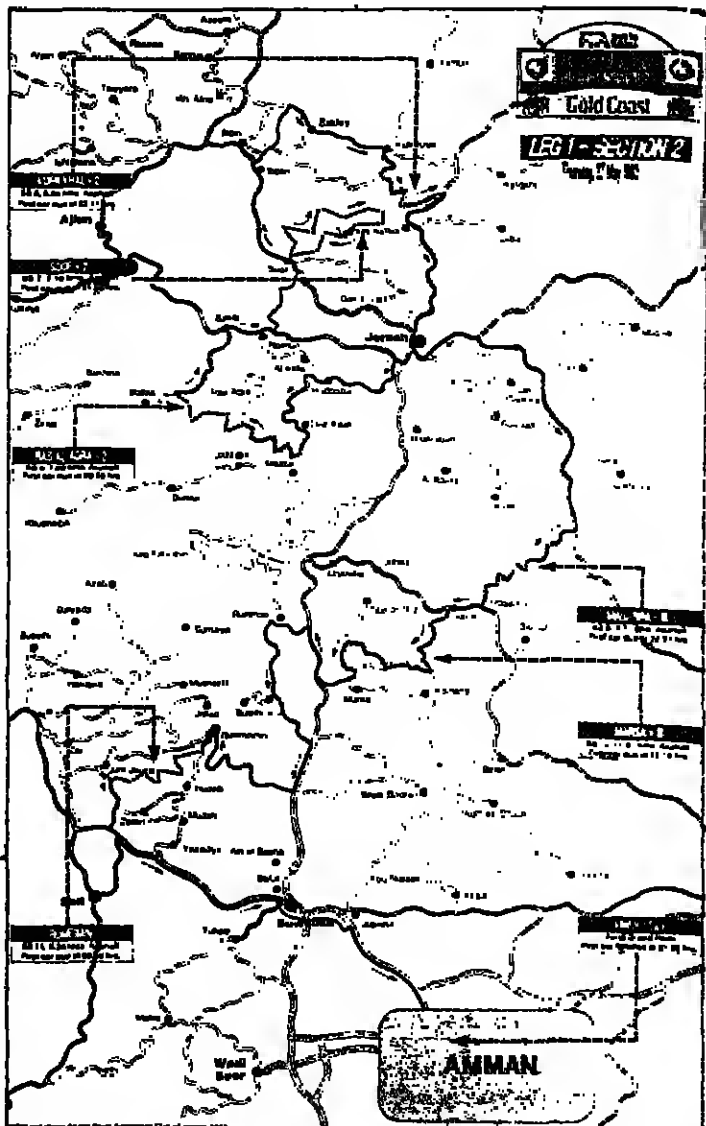
"There will be over 350 marshals and volunteers assisting us throughout the event," Mr. Louza Thursday told the Jordan Times.

In addition to the regular volunteers and officials, the RACJ has also sought the help of sports clubs north and south to the country.

Mr. Louza also pointed out that there were 32 group A and B homologated cars, 50 per cent of which are Jordanian. This, he said, is "a very encouraging and positive sign for the future."

Last year's winner Abbas Mosawi, told the Jordan Times that he would not be competing this year as he was concentrating on desert challenge RAID rallies this season.

This year's rally has attracted the best of Jordan's drivers in addition to competitors from Italy, Qatar, Lebanon, Cyprus, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the Czech Republic



A map illustrating the special stages of the first leg of the rally and Oman.

The rally is expected to be marked by fierce competition among tough challengers like Qatar's Naser Al Atiyeh,

Lebanon's Michel Saleh, Syria's Mudar al Assad, as well as Jordan's Marwan Abu Hamad, Amjad Farrah, Reimon Feifel and others.

Linighan's late header wins F.A. Cup for Arsenal

WEMBLEY (AP) — Defender Andy Linighan waited until the last possible moment to avert the first-ever penalty shootout in Football Association Cup final history Thursday, as he headed in a Paul Merson corner to give Arsenal a 2-1 victory over Sheffield Wednesday.

Linighan, positioned less than five yards from the goal, put the ball through the hands of England goalkeeper Chris Woods during injury time which had been added on to extra time.

The victory gives Arsenal its fifth F.A. Cup title and the London team became the first to capture both major English cups in one season, having defeated Wednesday in the League Cup final last month.

Arsenal's Ian Wright scored his 30th goal of the season and Chris Waddle answered for Wednesday as the teams were level after 90 minutes.

A shootout appeared inevitable as both clubs missed chances in extra time until Linighan found the net seconds before the final whistle.

"They made it very hard for us," said the 30-year-old defender. "Over the two games, I think it really deserved to go to penalties but I timed it just right."

The replay, the 14th in 112 F.A. Cup finals, was forced by a 1-1 draw last Saturday that had both teams showing the weary effects of the long season.

But, despite occasional sloppy play, the replay featured a quick tempo marked by spells of roughness.

Arsenal's Danish midfielder John Jensen set the mood early with an aggressive tackle that sent Chris Waddle to the turf for several minutes.

Merson had the game's first serious scoring opportunity after a 40-yard run left him with only Woods to beat, but the goalkeeper smothered the midfielder's weak effort.

Continued rough play led to several cautions from referee Kevin Barratt, who issued the

first yellow card to Mark Bright after the Wednesday striker bloodied Linighan's nose with an elbow in the 18th minute.

The peace accelerated in the final 15 minutes, and Arsenal's Smith received his first career booking when he pushed substitute Graham Hyde to the ground in the 77th minute.

Merson missed his second opportunity when his drive from the edge of the box was too hot for Woods to handle cleanly, and the keeper was fortunate to control the ball as it dribbled behind him toward the net.

Wednesday kept up the pressure but Nigel Worthington's cross was headed wide by Hirst in the 85th minute.

Hirst also had a chance in injury time, but he was again wide from the left side of the box after a fine run.

Both teams showed fatigue in extra time, and Arsenal had to make do without Wright, who was substituted by manager George Graham midway through the second half.

Bright looked sure to secure the game winner 14 minutes into overtime but was brought down with a spectacular tackle by Linighan well inside the box.

Wednesday played without regular captain Viv Anderson. The defender injured knee ligaments in Saturday's game and failed a fitness test prior to the replay.

The game attracted 62,267 fans, the smallest crowd to witness an F.A. Cup final in its 70 years at Wembley.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH, INC.
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q.1—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠10885 ♣A873 ♣K ♠J52
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Dbl ?
What action do you take?
You hold:
♠72 ♣AK1095 ♠AQ109 ♠A8
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
What do you bid now?
- Q.2—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠Q882 ♣643 ♠J92 ♠A83
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
1 ♠ Dbl 1 ♠ ?
What action do you take?
You hold:
♠AQ76 ♣AJ63 ♠7 ♠AK92
The bidding has proceeded:
East South West North
1 ♠ Dbl Pass 1 ♠
Pass ?
What do you bid now?
- Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AQ76 ♣AJ63 ♠7 ♠AK92
The bidding has proceeded:
East South West North
1 ♠ Dbl Pass 1 ♠
Pass ?
What do you bid now?
- Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠72 ♣AK1095 ♠AQ109 ♠A8
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
What do you bid now?
- Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A882 ♣643 ♠J92 ♠A83
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ ?
What action do you take?
You hold:
♠AQ76 ♣AJ63 ♠7 ♠AK92
The bidding has proceeded:
East South West North
1 ♠ Dbl Pass 1 ♠
Pass ?
What do you bid now?

TEACHER OF MATHEMATICS

The Bishop's School in Amman is seeking to employ an experienced mathematics teacher to teach up to grade 12 Tajwili.

Application forms to be collected from the school's reception desk.

Monday 24th. — Wednesday 26th. May 9:00 — 1:00

(Personal photo to be attached to application form)

OFFICES WANTED

UNRWA is looking for an office building or part of a building in Amman to rent.

Minimum office area needed is 3600 m2 (net) and parking for minimum 40 cars. The floor plans must be tailored for our needs.

Please submit your offer confidentially to Field Administration Officer Mr. Thomas W. Kramer, UNRWA, P.O. Box 484, Amman, Jordan or deliver it in a sealed envelope to our office in Shmeisani not later than 31 May 1993.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

An international construction contractor is seeking the employment of mechanical engineers to work on its major project at the North Ghors, Jordan Valley. Applicants should have a university degree in mechanical engineering, minimum 10 years experience, and excellent command of the English language.

Applications with detailed CV's should be sent to P.O. Box 9410, Amman, Jordan not later than 29.05.1993

Excellent conditions for successful applicants.

T O D A Y	<p>Cinema Tel.: 677420</p> <p>CONCORD</p> <p>DOC HOLLYWOOD</p> <p>Shows: 3:15; 6:00; 8:15; 10:30</p>	<p>Cinema Tel.: 699238</p> <p>PLAZA</p> <p>PREDATOR '2'</p> <p>Shows: 12:30; 3:15; 4:45; 6:30; 8:30; 10:30</p>	<p>Cinema Tel.: 634144</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA</p> <p>Desperately Seeking Suzan</p> <p>Shows: 12:30; 3:30; 6:15; 8:30; 10:30</p>	<p>Tel.: 675571</p> <p>Nabil Al Mashini Theatre</p> <p>Today the Nabil Mashini Theatre hosts</p> <p>Al Fawaris Troupe acting</p> <p>in a play entitled:</p> <p>Death of Taybeh</p> <p>By: Suheir Fahd, Mohammad Al Qabbani, Amer Al Khafash</p>	<p>Nabil & Hisham's Tel.: 625155</p> <p>AHLAN THEATRE</p> <p>presents</p> <p>Welcome Parliament and Budget</p> <p>On Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays AT 9:00 p.m.</p> <p>Welcome New World Order</p> <p>On Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 9:00 p.m.</p> <p>Please make advance reservation</p>
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Explosion kills one in S. Lebanon

TYRE (AP) — A land mine killed one man and wounded another as they walked across a hill overlooking Israel's self-designated "security zone" in South Lebanon Friday, police said. A police statement identified the fatality as Hussein Sbeity, 21, who was walking with his cousin Ali Sbeity when the mine blew up at 9:10 a.m. (0610 GMT). The hill is just north of the "security zone," which is patrolled by 1,500 Israeli troops and 3,000 allied South Lebanon Army militiamen. The two victims came from the nearby village of Kafra, a stronghold for the Iranian-backed Hizbollah, which leads a guerrilla warfare against the "security zone." Hizbollah guerrillas killed an Israeli officer and wounded two paratroopers just north of the security zone Tuesday, sparking an artillery duel. It was not known who planted the land mine. Such devices have been sown by the Israelis, the SLA and guerrillas alike. The new casualties raised to 34 people killed and 120 wounded in Israeli-guerrilla hostilities and related violence in South Lebanon this year.

73 senators criticise Syria over Jews

WASHINGTON (R) — Nearly three-quarters of the U.S. Senate asked President Bill Clinton Thursday to pressure Syria to live up to its commitment to allow Jews to leave the country. In a letter to the president, Senator Edward Kennedy, Senator Charles Grassley and 71 other senators said that since last September Syria had granted virtually no exit permits to the 1,400 Jews remaining in the country despite a commitment last year to do so by President Hafez Al Assad. The senators disputed Syria's denial that there had been any change in policy and that the problem was a bureaucratic one. "Syria's failure to abide by its promised change in visa policy for its Jewish community, continued support for terrorist groups, as well as its failure to abide by the Taif agreement by withdrawing from Lebanon last September present clear obstacles to closer relations including removal from the (State Department) terrorism list," the letter said. "We urge you to press Syria to honour its commitment to allow Jews the right to travel freely," the senators said.

Syria hangs five for setting jail fire

DAMASCUS (R) — Five men convicted of burning down a jail and killing 57 inmates were publicly hanged in the northeastern Syrian town of Al Hasakah, official dailies said Friday. The papers said three other men were sentenced to life imprisonment for their role in the March 24 fire, which was set to conceal an attempt to smuggle drugs into the jail. Police tried to extinguish the blaze, but the prisoners set another cell on fire, blocking escape routes. Five policemen were sentenced to three years in jail for dereliction of duty and accepting bribes to permit smuggling.

Israeli tank fire kills hunter in Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon (R) — A Lebanese hunter was killed and another wounded in South Lebanon on Friday by an Israeli tank that fired two shells at them, security sources said. They said the incident occurred on the edge of Israel's self-styled "security zone" near a hilltop position that had been attacked several times in the past by pro-Iranian guerrillas. The men, in their early 20s, were hunting birds, the sources said.

Pakistan denies receiving missiles from China

BEIJING (AP) — A Senior Pakistani official Friday denied his government has received missile shipments from China that violate Beijing's pledge to adhere to an international pact limiting arms sales. U.S. intelligence agencies recently reported evidence that China is shipping M-11 missiles to Pakistan. Satellite photos taken of the Pakistani port of Karachi show that China has not stopped the shipments of the surface-to-surface missiles since they began last fall. But Akram Zaki, secretary general of Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, denied that Pakistan has any M-11 missiles or that China was providing them. "These are speculative stories and motivated allegations," Mr. Zaki told reporters at a luncheon. "Once China made commitments to honour the MTCR limits, China has strictly adhered to those commitments and any allegations to the contrary are false and unfounded." The MTCR is the missile technology control regime, an international agreement that bars the transfer of medium- and long-range missiles. China agreed to honor MTCR guidelines in the fall of 1991, during then-Secretary of State James A. Baker's visit to Beijing. It has repeatedly denied the reports of missile shipments to Pakistan. Last fall, however, U.S. intelligence determined that sales to Pakistan were under way and that China was not making any effort to hide them from the probing eyes of U.S. spy satellites.

U.S., Britain, Kuwait to hold exercise

DUBAI (R) — U.S., British and Kuwaiti forces begin a five-day naval exercise in the northern Gulf on Saturday, the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command said Friday. "The exercise will also demonstrate U.S. seaborn capabilities and the continuing U.S. commitment to the security and stability of the Arabian Gulf region," the Central Command said in a statement sent to Reuters. Western powers have held several land, sea and air exercises with Gulf Arab states since the 1991 Gulf war, the statement said about 700 Americans will participate in Saturday's operation, code-named "Eager Sentry 93-94," in several U.S. warships and aircraft deployed aboard the carrier USS Nimitz. A detachment of the U.S. coast guard will take part in the exercise which will also involve electronic warfare, tactical helicopter control, communications and ship boarding and search exercises.

Pakistani beheaded in Riyadh

DUBAI (R) — A convicted Pakistani drug trafficker was beheaded in Saudi Arabia on Friday, the Saudi Interior Ministry said. In a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency, the ministry said Matheel Khan Qalazda was beheaded in the capital Riyadh. He was found guilty of trying to smuggle heroin into the kingdom.

Mild tremor rocks western Turkey

ISTANBUL (R) — A medium strength earthquake, measuring 4.3 on the Richter scale, rocked western Turkey on Friday, but caused no damage or injuries, seismologists reported. Seismologists at Istanbul's Kandilli observatory and earthquake research centre said the centre of tremor, which occurred at 1200 local time (0900 GMT), was the northwestern Anatolian town of Orhanhanli. The quake was also felt in some parts of Istanbul, eyewitnesses said.

Disney to meet Arab-Americans over 'Aladdin'

BURBANK, California (R) — The Walt Disney film studio, which earlier had rejected an Arab-American group's demand to remove allegedly racial slurs from the Oscar-winning animated film "Aladdin," said on Thursday it would meet with the organisation. The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) said in Bahrain that the film — the biggest-ever box office hit for an animated film — makes slurs against Arabs that would never be accepted if directed at any other ethnic group. "I come from a land... where they cut off your ear, if they don't like your face. It's barbaric, but hey, it's home," go the opening lyrics, according to a text released by the ADC. The group wants Disney to change the film when it releases it as a videocassette Oct. 1. The company refused, saying the group had made the demand several times before. "It's kind of old news. We have no intentions of changing Howard Ashman's lyrics." A Disney spokesman said. But the spokesman said later that the studio would meet with the group next Wednesday and no decision had been made.

Afghan rivals battle despite truce talks

KABUL (R) — Afghan guerrilla factions fought sporadic battles with government forces in Kabul Friday, just 24 hours after rival leaders called for a ceasefire to end 10 days of fratricidal street fighting that has killed hundreds. Government jets bombed hill-top positions of the radical Hezb-e-Islami party south of the city and fired mortar shells at guerrilla forces battling for control of a strategic road junction near the centre of the capital.

A Hezb-e-Islami spokesman said a delegation sent by President Burhanuddin Rabbani and Prime Minister-designate Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to impose a ceasefire had arrived in Kabul from the eastern city of Jalalabad Thursday.

No agreement had been reached on the laying down of weapons, he said.

"The delegates arrived at 4 p.m. yesterday to talk about a ceasefire but so far the development has not taken place," said Hezb-e-Islami spokesman Khalid al-fortified headquarters of the group at Charasyab, about 20 kilometres south of Kabul.

Moments after he spoke a government jet flying from a base north of the capital bombed a cluster of Hezb-e-Islami guard posts on a hill overlooking the guerrilla stronghold.

It was not known if there were any casualties.

Mr. Rabbani and his arch-rival Hekmatyar, who heads the Hezb-e-Islami, reached agreement on the cabinet Thursday after nearly 20 days of wrangling in Jalalabad over positions and division of power.

They prayed to God to guarantee peace and announced 21 ministries in a cabinet divided among the nine main guerrilla groups.

Rockets fired by rival guerrilla factions slammed into several parts of the capital Friday.

One injured woman sat moan-

ing by a roadside in the Hezb-controlled suburb of Darulaman after her house was demolished by rocket fire from pro-government batteries of the Saudi-backed Sunni Muslim Ittehad-e-Islami party.

Middle-aged Najiba Pashtun was bleeding from wounds in her head and thigh.

"She is suffering. Take her to hospital," her husband begged passing motorists. "My home was destroyed. We are so tired of the fighting."

Clashes on Friday were the highest for 10 days and followed intense rocket and mortar attacks the day before. Four mounds near the Defence Ministry marked the hastily dug graves of four pedestrians blown apart by a rocket Thursday.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said the capital's hospitals had treated 4,500 injured since the fighting erupted.

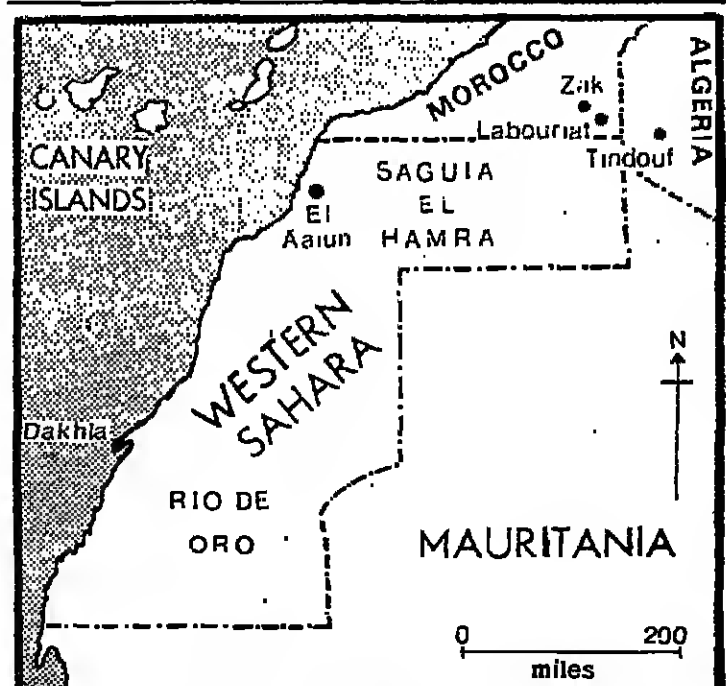
The death toll was difficult to estimate, because most are buried immediately, but was believed to be more than 1,000.

At the strategic Demazang road junction, scene of the bitterest fighting over the past 10 days, the body of a Hezb-e-Wahdat fighter lay on an Islamic green flag in the ruins of a bouse where he had been shot by government forces.

Hezb-e-Wahdat, allies of Mr. Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami, have been fighting for several days over the junction that controls access to the city from the west and southwest.

"These people are madmen," said a government commander as his forces fired mortar into guerrilla-controlled territory.

More than a third of Kabul's 1.5 million residents have fled and thousands of people have been killed in battles since the Mujahadeen took power from the fallen communist government in April 1992.



Polisario nears crossroad 20 years after camel raid

TINDOUF, Algeria (R) — A few guerrillas on camels who raided a Spanish military post in the Western Sahara 20 years ago started a war that may not be over yet.

The Polisario Front, which marks the anniversary of its attack on Al Khanga Thursday, is nearing a crossroad between peace or resumed conflict with Morocco.

Although a ceasefire has held since September 1991, a promised referendum to let the people of the former Spanish colony choose between independence or integration with Morocco, has been blocked in a row over who can vote.

The United Nations, trying to implement a five-year-old peace plan, is losing patience and Polisario leaders increasingly warn that they are ready to fight on if the peace plan fails.

"Our army is still in place. If it can fight against Morocco for 17 years, it can go on for more years," Cheikh Doua, first counsellor at the Polisario embassy in Algiers, told Reuters.

"There is always the will to continue the war but we prefer a political solution."

Spain's last soldiers left in February 1976 under pressure from Morocco, which sent 350,000 citizens across the frontier in a "green march" the previous year.

But while Spain ceded the territory to Morocco and Mauritania, Polisario's guerrillas proclaimed independence as the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic or (SADR).

"When the Moroccans came, only the enemy changed. The war continued," said Mr. Doua.

Mauritania made peace with the front and in 1984 joined other, mainly Third World, nations in recognising the SADR. "We have made great progress, from a handful of badly-armed men on camels to recognition by 74 countries and an army still

ready to fight after years battling the Moroccans," said another Polisario official in Algiers.

Western Sahara, a stretch of Northwest African coast opposite the Canary Islands, has been described as "a God-forsaken, scorching desert tract half the size of France with little water and less people."

But hundreds have died in the conflict and tens of thousands displaced to refugee camps in neighbouring countries.

U.N. refugee officials estimate there are 165,000 Saharans around Polisario's main centre at Tindouf in southwest Algeria, of which it claims 80,000 are "vulnerable" — the young, the old, the pregnant and the sick.

Polisario, led by Mohammed Abdul Aziz, saw its army evolve over the years from camel-riding raiders to units equipped with Soviet-made T-54 tanks, BMP-1 armoured personnel carriers and missiles.

The London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies estimates its force at 10,000 men, with perhaps 4,000 active.

Rabat, which at times committed up to 100,000 troops to the costly conflict, controls some four-fifths of the territory.

Its army guards towns and phosphate mines, the main economic asset, behind more than 1,600 kilometres of sand and rock ridges running from Zag in the north towards Zag in the south and then along the Mauritanian frontier to the Atlantic.

Secretary-General Boutros Ghali is due in the region soon to try to revive the peace plan, and the official responsible for voter identification, Erik Jensen, visited Morocco this month.

Both sides agree on voting rights for a basic 74,000 names in a 1974 Spanish census, but Polisario accuses Rabat of trying to rig the vote by bringing in thousands of settlers.



Afghan government soldiers get their machinegun ready for attack near a frontline in the ongoing battles in Kabul (AFP photo)

Mideast arms talks inch ahead

WASHINGTON (AP) — Israeli and Arab negotiators completed three days of arms control talks Thursday, agreeing on a variety of measures to build up trust among the enemies of the Middle East.

The Mideast arms control talks, part of the Arab-Israeli peace talks, were convened for their fourth session with some 40 countries and international organisations in attendance — including Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, North African States, European countries, Japan, Australia, Canada, the United States and Russia.

The sides agreed that Arabs and Israelis will benefit from the experience of the countries outside the region on such issues as how to set up conflict prevention centres, to establish so-called hotlines between their capitals, to exchange information on military manoeuvres, and to conduct joint search and rescue operations.

Countries such as the Netherlands and Turkey have volunteered to organise workshops for Arabs and Israelis in the coming months on some of these issues, Israeli officials said. Denmark has invited the Arabs and Israelis to observe NATO manoeuvres in July, they added.

But the officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, made clear that steps to actually slash Arab and Israeli arsenals are a

long way off.

"Arms control isn't a goal, peace is," said one Israeli official.

"It can assist peace, but you have to raise the level of mutual confidence before you can get into discussion of arsenals," he added.

The State Department, meanwhile, said the talks produced "positive results."

Australia, Canada and Japan all made presentations on ways to enhance regional security and limit weapons deliveries, the department said in a statement.

Israel has managed to fend off initial Arab demands that a first agenda item should be discussion of Israel's nuclear facilities, Israel is widely believed to have dozens of nuclear warheads, although it has never officially confirmed these reports.

But although Arab countries still want Israel to open up its suspected nuclear facilities and sign the international nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, they have agreed to concentrate for now on confidence building measures, said a U.S. official who asked not to be named.

The United States is largely credited with steering the talks towards confidence measures, building on some 20 years of its experience in arms control with the Soviets.

Israel is the only power in the

Middle East believed to have nuclear weapons. But Israel, Egypt and Syria are known to have chemical and biological weapons programmes. Syria and Lebanon are boycotting the talks pending progress in their direct peace talks with Israel, where they are demanding that the Israelis give up land for peace.

For the first time since the arms talks began in January 1992, a Palestinian delegation also took part.

The purpose of the working group "is to identify practical next steps, possible confidence-building measures which the parties to this conference can explore, try to intensify the pace of their work and expand the scope of contacts within the group," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher explained.

The ninth round of direct Arab-Israeli peace talks adjourned Thursday after three weeks of negotiations in Washington. Those talks involve Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians. Neither the Syrians nor the Lebanese are attending the multilateral working group session, in keeping with their past practice. They have also boycotted the other multilateral working groups which deal with economic development, water, the environment and refugees.

Ankara reviews Iraqi Kurdish request to use Turkish lire

ANKARA (AP) — Turkey Friday left the door open to a plan by Iraqi Kurds to substitute Turkish currency for Iraqi dinars.

Iraqi Kurds asked Turkey's help last week to substitute Turkish liras for the worthless Iraqi currency in northern Iraq, where they have set up a de facto state.

Baghdad recently abolished the pre-Gulf war 25-dinar bills widely used by the Iraqi Kurds and took measures to prevent their conversion into other denominations.

Iraq said the change was necessary because of attempts by Gulf states to destabilise the Iraqi economy by introducing the pre-war dinars into Iraq.

"We have no intention of interfering in the domestic affairs of Iraq," said a Foreign Ministry spokesman, Volkan Vural, at a news briefing.

"It is every sovereign country's right to abolish its money. But, we want to see the matter solved with good intention."

He said "every aspect of the issue was under study" before a decision was made on how to respond to the Kurdish request.

It was unclear where the Kurds would obtain lire. The currency could come in the place of material aid from Turkey, or be withdrawn directly from Turkish banks.

Peres: China promises no missile sales to Mideast

PEKING (Agencies) — China has promised it will sell no more missiles to warring Middle Eastern countries, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said here Friday, congratulating Peking for what he called an enlightened policy.

"The (Chinese) foreign minister told me two things: 'That China does not intend to sell missiles to the Middle Eastern countries which are at war, and (that) China will be very careful not to supply weapons that may endanger the security of our country,'" Mr. Peres said.

Some Western countries have asserted that China, which sold its Silkorm missiles to Iran in the 1980s, intended to sell missiles to Syria.

Mr. Peres is here on a six-day visit, the first to China by an Israeli foreign minister since the two countries established diplomatic relations in January 1992.

"China is really developing a policy of peace and responsibility," said Mr. Peres, who appeared clearly satisfied with the results of his trip so far.

Mr. Peres said that Qian Qichen, China's foreign minister and vice-premier, had emphasised that there would be no missile sales to Syria in particular.

"(Qian) was clear and specific about it," he said. "China will not sell any missiles to Syria in the future."

Mr. Peres clearly showed his pleasure at Israel's new relationship with China.

"We anticipate that the Chinese position in the United Nations on voting... will express the new position of China vis-a-vis peace in the Middle East," Mr. Peres said.

He said that China's words carried weight with all sides in the Middle East peace process and that Peking would be one of the world's key bridging countries, helping to create the climate for peace.

Mr. Peres drew a distinction between China's past as a staunch supporter of Arab states and its present as an important friend to both sides. He said much of the change was due to the new world situation, after the collapse of the former Soviet Union.

"The nations didn't change but the world changed," he said.

Mr. Peres would not be drawn on Israeli arms sales to China, which diplomats believe are taking place.

"We do not consider ourselves a major supplier of arms to China," Mr. Peres said. "I didn't come here to sell arms and I wasn't asked to do so."

He said he was pleased that China had offered to host a multilateral meeting as part of the Middle East peace process. That meeting, on water use, will take place in September.

Mr. Peres arrived in Peking Wednesday night. He will travel to Shanghai, China's largest city, Saturday and leave China Monday.

Israel allows Palestinians to pray at Aqsa

(Continued from page 1)

The Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth said Ms. Somarruga's visit was prompted by the closure of the occupied territories.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali deplored Thursday a substantial increase in violence in the occupied territories in recent weeks and appealed to all sides to exercise restraint.

In a statement issued through a spokesman, he also expressed concern at a sharp deterioration of the economic situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip resulting from the Israeli closure of the territories and urged the international community to provide greater economic aid.

"The secretary-general is deeply concerned at the substantial increase in violent incidents during recent weeks in which a number of Palestinians and Israelis were killed and wounded in the occupied territories," the U.N. spokesman said.

"He deplores these acts of violence and appeals to all sides for restraint and to avoid steps which will aggravate the situation."

Appealing to the international community for greater economic assistance to the occupied territories, the secretary-general also reminded major donor countries of the critical financial situation of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which faced a budget deficit of \$28.5 million earlier this month.

COLUMN I

Britain's Queen Mother undergoes throat operation

LONDON (R) — The elderly Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, was recovering Friday after an hour-long operation to remove an obstruction from her throat, causing concern for her health amongst Britons. The 92-year-old widow of King George VI, one of the royal family's most popular members, had been staying in Scotland near the royal Balmoral Castle when she was rushed to Aberdeen hospital Thursday evening with a tightening of the throat. "Her Majesty's condition is comfortable, and she is presently sleeping," Alan Reid, a spokesman for the hospital said Friday. "Her Majesty will remain in the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary under observation." A spokeswoman for Buckingham Palace would not be drawn on the nature of Thursday's operation, which was conducted under anaesthetic, but she said: "It was minor and definitely not life-threatening." Asked if the Queen Mother's age posed any difficulties, Mr. Reid, without divulging the nature of the surgery, said an operation was always "dangerous (for a person of that age)." Hospital sources said there would be further tests on the Queen Mother Friday.

Staff of White House travel office fired

WASHINGTON (AP) — The entire staff of the White House travel office was abruptly fired and the FBI was asked to investigate allegations of "shoddy accounting procedures" and "gross mismanagement." In all, seven workers, all of them on the White House payroll for at least 10 years, were fired and asked to leave by the end of the day. A distant cousin of President Bill Clinton, Catherine Cornelius, was appointed to temporarily run the office following the dismissals. The office coordinates commercial travel for White House staffers and chapters plans for the White House press corps that accompany the president. White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers said the administration called in the Peat Marwick accounting firm after an initial, routine review found "almost no documentation of money that was coming in and going out and the records that were there were found to be inadequate." She said the FBI has been contacted, and an agency inquiry was likely "given the kinds of information and the amount of money involved."

"We believe that all seven individuals were part of the poor management situation," she said, adding initial results showed "some serious overbilling of the press."

Ms. Myers said the office's shortcomings came to light as part of Vice President Al Gore's government-wide efficiency review.

U.S. drugs shipped abroad without warning labels

WASHINGTON (R) — Multi-national drug companies including U.S.-based pharmaceutical houses shipped prescription drugs lacking proper warning labels in developing countries, a U.S. government agency said Thursday.

A seven-year investigation of labels on drugs in Brazil, Kenya, Panama and Thailand found two-thirds of the 241 sampled failed to provide the labelling a physician needs to use the drugs safely and effectively, Senator Edward Kennedy said in releasing the report by the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) that he is asking the government to act on the abuses.

"The United States has an obligation to ensure that citizens of other countries are not harmed by inadequate or misleading labels on American products," he said. The drug labels investigated were manufactured by 19 companies. The OTA, a non-partisan scientific research arm of Congress, found that in other countries Pfizer Inc.'s Fel-dace, an arthritis drug, was promoted for general pain relief while it is restricted to treatment of arthritis in the United States. It also did not mention the risk of liver damage.

Allende's family fights to recover artworks

SANTIAGO (R) — The widow and daughters of President Salvador Allende, ousted in Chile's 1973 coup, are fighting to recover artworks they say were taken when their homes were ransacked after the military seized power.

Family lawyers said Thursday they had filed court papers seeking the return of more than 300 objects, mainly paintings and antique furniture, seized from Mr. Allende's homes.